UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
AA000286991 5

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2008 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

http://www.archive.org/details/expositionsofgre00smit

EXPOSITIONS

OF

GREAT PICTURES.

Edinburgh : Printed by Ballantyne and Company.

EXPOSITIONS

OF

GREAT PICTURES.

BY

RICHARD HENRY SMITH, JUN.,
AUTHOR OF "EXPOSITIONS OF THE CARTOONS OF RAPHAEL."

Illustrated by Photographs.

"Such pictures scarcely bear to be spoken of at all. Let them hang in their silent holiness upon the wall of our most sacred room, to be gazed on at times when we feel the emptiness and vanity of all things in this life ; and when our imagination, coming to the relief of our hearts, willingly wafts us to the heaven which inspired such creations of genius. Those great painters, North, were great divines."—NOCTES AMBROSIANÆ.

LONDON:
JAMES NISBET AND CO., 21 BERNERS STREET.
M.DCCC.LXIII.

ND
1145
S65e

PREFACE.

THE following "Expositions of Great Pictures" owe their appearance to the reception given, by the public and by the press, three years ago, to the "Expositions of the Cartoons of Raphael," and they will be found to form a companion volume to that Work.

The revival and the growth of the public interest in Sacred Art has encouraged the Author to continue his comments on Bible Pictures; and he has written, under the conviction, that an expositor may render real service to his fellow-laymen, by offering the results of his long and loving study of the great works of the Great Masters.

The Photographs, being printed from early engravings, possess peculiar value. The pictures themselves are now so changed, by repainting, from what they were, that their original condition is, in most cases, only to be traced in those rare plates which were executed before the ravages of time, and the labours of the restorer, had marred the masters' work. These Engravings may thus be regarded as the best copies we possess of these great Pictures, and Photography, undisturbed by colour, has reproduced them with the utmost fidelity.

HANLEY, *September* 1863.

CONTENTS.

		PAGE
I.	LA MADONNA DELLA SEGGIOLA, ...	1
II.	THE TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD, AND THE FAILURE OF THE APOSTLES, ...	13
III.	THE RESURRECTION OF LAZARUS, ...	33
IV.	THE LAST SUPPER, ...	43
V.	CHRIST PRESENTED BY PILATE TO THE PEOPLE, . .	61
VI.	THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS, ...	73
VII.	THE BURIAL OF OUR LORD, ...	91

EXPOSITIONS OF GREAT PICTURES.

No. I.

La Madonna della Seggiola.

"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise : When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife : for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS; for he shall save his people from their sins. (Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel ; which being interpreted, is God with us.) Then Joseph, being raised from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife : and knew her not till she had brought forth her first-born son : and he called his name JESUS."—MATTHEW i. 18-25.

"LA MADONNA DELLA SEGGIOLA."

"And Mary said,
'My soul doth magnify the Lord,
And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.
For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden;
For, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.
For he that is mighty hath done to me great things;
And holy is his name.
And his mercy is on them that fear him
From generation to generation.
He hath shewed strength with his arm;
He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts!
He hath put down the mighty from their seats,
And hath exalted them of low degree.
He hath filled the hungry with good things;
And the rich he hath sent empty away.
He hath holpen his servant Israel,
In remembrance of his mercy;
As he spake to our fathers,
To Abraham, and to his seed for ever.'"

THE VIRGIN'S HYMN.

HERE is no difficulty in selecting "The Madonna" for our gallery. None of our readers can hesitate for a moment in deciding either upon their painter or their picture. Amongst the great masters who have treated this subject, they must turn at once to Raphael, who is allowed by the profession to have excelled all others in his representation of the Virgin Mother; and the countless copies and engravings of his picture in the Pitti Palace at Florence prove that, amongst his many Madonnas, "The Madonna della Seggiola" is considered, by common consent, to be his *chef d'œuvre*. At any rate it is the favourite of Protestant Christendom. Few see any Popery in it. No saints intrude upon the sacred scene. In this respect it stands almost alone.

As we study the magnificent Madonna at Dresden, we are disturbed by Pope Sixtus, who comes in and kneels down on one side, and by St Barbara, who follows his example, and kneels opposite to him on the other. "The Madonna di San Sisto" looks as if it had been painted for the black friars. "The Madonna della Seggiola" is not known to have been painted for any one, and it looks as if it might have been painted for all. There is no sectarianism in it. It is also as marvellously free from affectation. It is in this that Raphael is distinguished from other painters, and it is this which forms the peculiar excellence of this Madonna. She is quite at her ease. She can raise her eyes, which she rarely does in his other pictures, and look at you.

In the Sistine Madonna, Raphael has aimed at expressing supernatural grandeur. The Virgin and Child have forgotten their human relation in the Divinity that transfigures them. He has foregone the temptation, if such occurred to him, of introducing one of those touches of nature which would only have defeated his purpose. Like other great masters, he painted only one idea at a time. It is, in truth, this unity which gives them such a hold upon the mind. With the same singleness of purpose he has confined himself in the Madonna della Seggiola to the common and homely incident of a mother caressing her boy.

The power of the picture lies in its simplicity. It is treated in such a manner that no great scope is left for grouping. There is apparently nothing laboured or artistic about it. It is indeed full of art, but the art is concealed. You cannot but admire its composition, its colour, and its chiaroscuro, when your attention is drawn to these things, but as the mother and child fix their eyes upon you, they hold you spellbound, and you forget for a time that you are only looking at a picture. Many of Raphael's works appear never to have lost in execution an iota of their first conception. Their ultimate appearance on canvas impresses you with the certainty of their being one and the same with his original idea. It is this, perhaps, which suggested the story of the design having been

painted on the head of a beer-barrel, in a harvest-field, where a peasant was nursing her child. There is an air of ease about it, as if it had been struck off at once, under the inspiration of some happy moment.

Many of the earlier Madonnas offend you by their superstition, and many of the later ones by their irreverence. You often see in the pre-Raphaelites an affectation of supernatural expression, and in the post-Raphaelites, mere studies in form, or light and shade. Raphael was kept from the one fault by his genius, and from the other by his religion. He is known to have been specially devoted to the Virgin, and to have been specially devout when painting her portrait. He founded a chapel in her honour in the church of Sta Maria della Rotunda, and being in Florence soon after the martyrdom of Savonarola, he must have heard of the vehement indignation with which that great preacher had reproached the painters for displaying their vain conceits in the churches. If we may judge from his pictures, he appears evidently to have been acquainted with Da Vinci's directions for painting women, and these were regarded by the profession as a receipt for representing the Madonna. "Women must appear very modest and reserved in their air, their knees close together, their arms across, and the head gracefully bowing, and a little inclined to one side." We know for a certainty some of his plans, for in one of his letters to Count Castiglioni, he says, "To paint a beautiful woman, I must see several, with this condition, that your lordship be near me to select the loveliest. But there being a dearth both of good judges and beautiful women, I make use of a certain idea that comes into my mind. Whether with benefit to art, I know not, but I strive to form such an ideal in my mind."

In the treatment of religious subjects, especially where saints, angels, or our Saviour are introduced, artists have often been sadly at fault in the conception, and in the expression of their idea of the superhuman and the divine. In the case of the Madonna there was a peculiar difficulty. A mother holding her babe was an everyday

sight. Few seemed to see how so simple and ordinary an object could be treated as to inspire reverence and devotion. Hence, perhaps, the accessories, the gilded glories, the suns, and moons, and stars, and other mystic symbols of the Madonnas painted during the reign of faith, and the mere animal beauty or artistic excellence of the succeeding reign of taste.

Raphael seems to have believed that man had been made in the image of God, and that, although the likeness had been lost, yet that at times it reappeared, passing as a fleeting expression over the human countenance, and then vanishing away. This relic of Eden seems to have been spared to womanhood and childhood. It is seen in some women when they are mothers, and in some children when they are young. It is this, perhaps, which explains the rapt gaze of the mother as she bends over her boy, reading in his countenance that "of children is the kingdom of heaven." It is this, perhaps, which interprets the strange looking of the child into his mother's face, and the yet stronger veneration of the man for her whom he still regards as "that holiest thing alive." There is an appearance of divinity about some children in their early childhood, and a look of heaven about some mothers with their first-born babe, and, as we turn to "The Madonna della Seggiola," we cannot help persuading ourselves that Raphael must have seen this heavenly vision in some mother and child, and painted it.

It is this, which we must have all seen at some time or other, which makes us feel the power of this picture. There is an appeal made to our experience. We have known, or, what is better, we have had such a mother or such a son, and the picture, while embodying and immortalising the expression of a countenance which has long since been changed, not only thus becomes instantly and unspeakably precious to us, but it obtains further and higher power, as it avails itself of our most hallowed recollections, and stirs our mind by way of remembrance of the glorious gospel of the Nativity. It reminds us that we are the children of God, and that our Saviour was the Son of man. In its simplicity and unwavering faith it does

not shrink from representing our Lord as He is set before us in the gospel, made in all points like unto us, born of a woman, made under the law. It preaches to us in a language which we can all understand, the Fatherhood of God and the thorough humanity of our Saviour, by placing before us a child upon a mother's knee. As we look on the child, we have hope in Christ, both for ourselves and our children. We see the mind of Christ,—we find Him humbling Himself in the fashion of a babe, and, as we are thus assured that He has really taken upon Him our nature, we argue that He will never be ashamed of calling us brethren. We see the mother gathering her child to her bosom, and folding it in her arms, and she teaches us to know more of God, and more of Jesus Christ whom He has sent. But still we feel that, although a mother's love may be the type, it can never be the measure of the love of God. The love of God, passing all understanding, surpasseth the love of women. The picture yet speaks to us again. It re-echoes those homely and wonderful words, "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." *

Many an artist has shewn us that a painting may be natural without being spiritual. Raphael has proved, by his treatment of sacred subjects, and especially by this Madonna, that the spiritual in art can only be fully developed in the degree in which the painting is natural. Everything here is true to nature. The coloured handkerchiefs on the head and shoulders of the Virgin are facsimiles of those which were worn by the Italian women. The low seat is what has been found all the world over to be the most convenient for nursing. The child's hands are buried in the mother's bosom. The bloom of womanhood, and the diffidence and gentleness of manner, are to be seen now and then, amongst all classes, in a mother as she caresses her first-born son. A poor woman is sometimes a lady. Mary is here represented in one of her best moments, during her best days. Like other mothers, she appears to have

* Isaiah xlix. 13.

somewhat deteriorated in after years, as we may learn from her conduct on various occasions. Just now she is the calmest, tenderest, purest, and happiest of mothers, and, while she is fondly pressing her cheek against the boy's face in all the placid enjoyment of a mother's love, you can see, as you look into her countenance, an under-current of deep humility and profound gratitude. She is nourishing and cherishing the child as a gift from God, wondering at the miracle of her possessing it, and pondering over those things which she had laid up in her heart. The best of mothers must sometimes have some such seasons. The mother of our Lord must often have thought of the past and the future, as she took our Lord in her arms, and, as she did so, she would often be soothed with the recollection of the song she had sung before He was born. She appears to us as if she were now remembering it, and we have therefore prefaced our paper with the words.

The boy is enjoying the well-known privilege of an only child. He is sitting on his mother's knee as upon a throne. He sits there as if no one had a right to it but himself. He is as silent as his mother, and as lost in thought. He looks older than he is, gazing upon you with that seriousness which is often to be found in a child's face. It is only when you notice his feet that you can guess his age. He has still the habit of playing with his toes as he did when he was a babe. His size, beauty, and quiet consciousness of power, foreshadow his increase in wisdom and stature, and his growth in favour with God and man.

The elder boy, who has come up to the chair, and is standing by the Virgin, reminds you of the attraction which is felt by other children towards a mother when she is nursing the youngest. Were it not for his folded hands, the cross, and the gilded glory about his head, you might mistake his interest for that which is often displayed in many homes. There is a picture in Madrid, supposed to have been painted by Raphael, where the Virgin and Child are represented exactly as they appear here, though their figures are somewhat smaller, and the St John is omitted. His presence is in

perfect keeping with Scripture, and his expression of awe and adoration, if his worship were intended only for the child, would then suggest the feeling that ought to be awakened in every spectator. This third figure, and the carved arm of the chair, however, remind us that there is something else in the picture besides what we have noticed, and that it was intended to serve the purposes of Romish piety. It is an enthroned Madonna, and we must not turn away from it before we have looked at it a while in that light. The ancient, enduring, and wide-spread delusion of the worship of the Virgin must be noticed, however briefly, in any notes which pretend to be an exposition of a Madonna.

The worship of the Virgin has prevailed for more than a millennium, and during the whole period it has given abundant employment to the world of art. The thousands of the Madonnas, where we have endless repetitions of the same figures and an infinite variety of attitude and sentiment, are only some amongst the tens of thousands of other pictures which refer to her history, and which evidently represent her as if she were divine. The great proportion are votive offerings made by persons, or churches, in acknowledgment of private or public mercies which were supposed to have been vouchsafed either directly by her hand, or indirectly through her interference. This accounts for the frequent introduction of the various saints, and the presence of the curious diminutive portraits of the donors.

The earliest specimens of Christian art are to be found in the Catacombs, and the Virgin appears there merely as an ordinary historical personage, forming a part of a group in the representation of the Nativity, or the Adoration of the Magi. In the beginning of the fourth century, about the time of Constantine, a disposition was manifested to pay her divine honours. Certain sacrifices that had belonged to Cybele, the mother of the gods, were transferred to Mary as the mother of our Lord. The same name, the Queen of Heaven, was soon given to her who seemed to hold a similar position in Christianity as the heathen goddess did in Polytheism. The

change of religion was thus rendered less abrupt, and the new superstition was thus made to answer the same purpose as the old. This heresy, like most, if not all others, sprang from the people. It was eventually, as we shall see, adopted by the priests, but they prophesied falsely only because the people loved to have it so. This error, like the other superstitions of Romanism, is to be traced to its origin in human nature. It was indeed first of all introduced by some heathen converts who were evidently only partially acquainted with the gospel about Christ, and were only half turned from their idols. We must not, however, conclude, that the origin of the worship of the Virgin is to be found in the cakes of meal and honey, which some women who had emigrated from Thrace into Arabia offered to her as if she were God. The origin, growth, and continuance of this custom are to be traced to a deeper source. The custom is something more than a heathenish superstition; it is a thoroughly human expedient for supplying a thoroughly human want. A god with a woman's heart has been always, and all the world over, most devoutly desired. Had the nature of our Lord and the mind that was in Him been better known, the worship of the Virgin had never been introduced. At any rate, it would never have continued. The delusion would have died out, as unfounded and unnecessary.

The proclamation of the truth about our Lord is sufficient in itself to destroy the error about His mother. Our Lord has only to be set forth in His perfect humanity, and the axe will be laid to the root of this tree, which has well-nigh filled the world with its branches. Our Lord became flesh and dwelt amongst us, and the record of His life upon earth abounds with facts which prove that He really did take upon Him the nature of man. We have in Him what we want, an incarnate God. He is God, and He is man. His humanity is as great a fact as His divinity. He was made, not as we are, but as "man" was before the fall, "male and female." Our Lord, for instance, shewed again and again that He possessed a woman's nature, and that He had a woman's heart. His self-

denial, that found no sacrifice too great or too trifling,—His tender and thoughtful care, which was ever surprising those with whom He was brought into contact, and His words and works in the time of trouble, prove our position. After noticing His love for children,—His anxiety that the weary should find rest, and that the hungry should find food;—after seeing Him in seasons of sickness, death, and mourning, we learn that He can supply all our need of a woman's feeling. As we come unto God by Him, weary and heavy laden, we have the greatest confidence and comfort in the compassionate intercession of our merciful and faithful High Priest. As our Mediator, He is, as in everything else, all, and in all. His advocacy with the Father leaves nothing to be desired. Our souls do safely trust in Him. The worship of the Virgin is superfluous.

By the decree of the first Council of Ephesus in A.D. 431, Mary was declared to be the mother of our Saviour, as He was God as well as man. The divinity of the mother was argued from the divinity of the Son, and the Madonna and Child were invested from that time with a theological significance, and became the exponent of the orthodox faith. The symbol was adopted as a badge distinguishing the Catholic believer from the Nestorian dissenter, and was soon to be found everywhere in the houses and churches of the faithful.

A pseudo-portrait of the Virgin, as might be expected, quickly made its appearance, and for three hundred years everything seemed to favour the spread of the superstition. Her image in every form and material was multiplied throughout Christendom. This triumph of idolatry led to the struggle of the Iconoclasts, and their attempted reformation was followed by the reaction which produced the first miraculous pictures; and the old, ugly, dark-coloured, Greek effigies, were imagined to possess the same sanctity and power as the winking Madonnas of the present day.

The revival and reformation of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries may be traced in the works of Dante, as well as in those of Cimabue and Giotto. The poet is to be credited as well as the painters for those spiritual Madonnas which have never been ex-

celled in their divine and contemplative grace. Many of them are said to be the result of the pious labours of monks and friars, who wrought on their knees, endeavouring to reproduce the ideal that had been revealed to them in visions or dreams.

The cultivation of classical learning, the taste for the antique, and the spirit of sacerdotalism, were the next influences which modified the representations of the Madonna, and her pictures in the seventeenth century became almost entirely either Popish or Pagan. The figure of Mary, like the Venus in ancient art, is often nothing more than a mere study in animal beauty, her maternal character is again and again set aside, and she stands alone, or in company with some ecclesiastic, who either awakens your pity as he grovels before you, the victim of some debasing superstition, or rouses your indignation by his priestly pride.

It has long been customary, among the amateurs of painting upon the Continent, to distinguish certain pictures of the different schools of high value and reputation by characteristic names, serving to render them easily known from others of similar subjects by the same artists. These names are often indicative of some peculiar accessory, inserted by the painter, in a conspicuous part of his picture. Thus a celebrated Madonna by Correggio, in the collection of the King of Naples, is known under the title of "La Madonna del Coniglio," from the introduction of a rabbit. It is in this way that the present picture has obtained its name, the chair in which the Virgin is seated being chosen as the object by which it is to be distinguished.

The picture is painted on wood, and is about two feet eight inches in diameter. It is executed in the second manner of Raphael, and betrays to some connoisseurs the influence of his many works in fresco. Like other paintings, it once travelled to France, forming part of the spoils of Napoleon. It has long since been restored to its old home in the Hall of Mars. The room is well lit, and the picture is well hung. It is the gem of the gallery, and the gallery ranks amongst the richest in Europe.

EXPOSITIONS OF GREAT PICTURES.

No. II.

The Transfiguration of our Lord, and the Failure of the Apostles.

"And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them. And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them. And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus. And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. For he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid. And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son; hear him. And suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves. And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead. And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean. And they asked him, saying, Why say the scribes that Elias must first come? And he answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things; and how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought. But I say unto you, That Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him. And when he came to his disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them. And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and, running to him, saluted him. And he asked the scribes, What question ye with them? And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have

brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit: and wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him; and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not. He answereth him and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? Bring him unto me. And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed, foaming. And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child: and ofttimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us. Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief. When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more unto him. And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead. But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose. And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out? And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting. And they departed thence, and passed through Galilee; and he would not that any man should know it. For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day. But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him."—MARK ix. 2-32.

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD, AND THE FAILURE OF THE APOSTLES.

> "And when all beheld
> Him, where he lay, how changed from yesterday—
> Him in that hour cut off; and at his head
> His last great work; when entering in, they look'd
> Now on the dead, then on that masterpiece—
> Now on his face, lifeless and colourless—
> Then on those forms divine that lived and breathed,
> And would live on for ages—all were moved,
> And sighs burst forth, and loudest lamentations."
>
> ROGERS'S ITALY.

THE poet is speaking of the well-known circumstances under which this great picture was first exhibited. It so happened that it had then to be placed where its purpose would probably be perceived. At any rate, its circumstances would materially assist its interpretation. Addressed, as most of Raphael's other works were, to the mind rather than to the eye, and requiring, even more than his cartoons, that spectators should not only be in possession of the facts of Christianity, but actually feeling their spirit and power, it began thus, more than three hundred years ago, to tell its tale.

Hardly finished at the time of his sudden death, the picture was hung immediately above the head of the painter, as his body lay in state, in the room where he had been in the habit of working. The hidden unity of its twofold division would be thus likely to be revealed to the faithful. They would be looking at the picture in a double light. They would read it by the light of their sorrow over he death of this world, and by the light of their hope of the life of

the world to come. Its spiritual idea would dawn upon them. Their very circumstances would be suggestive of that mysterious fact which it attempts to represent—our deliverance from evil by a *Divine* Redeemer.

In reading a book or a picture, we find that much of the impression we receive depends upon ourselves. Those authors who appeal to our imagination suppose that we shall meet them half-way in their conception; and it is peculiar to the confidence of genius to trust spectators and readers in this manner. Other artists, correct and careful to a fault, betray their inferiority by the elaborate and distressing pains they take lest they should be misunderstood. Raphael credited his readers with having eyes to see and hearts to understand; and doubtless the picture appeared to many of its first spectators what it really was—a reprint of one of the many pages in the long history of human redemption.

"The Transfiguration," through the many copies which have been carefully made, and the genius and number of the engravings, is almost, if not quite, as well and as widely known as the cartoons. Our readers will therefore find no difficulty in following our exposition and testing its truth. The bare mention of the picture will be sufficient to recall the vision, where our Lord is floating in the air, accompanied by Moses and Elias,—Peter, James, and John, lying on the ground, unable to stand in the presence of God,—the nine apostles beneath the mountain, discomfited by their failure, two of whom, by pointing to the Saviour, seem to connect the lower with the upper scene, and to hint at the unity of the double action,—and the crowd on the other side accompanying the father, who holds his demoniac boy. Some of our readers, doubtless, will have seen the original in the Vatican. Others, like ourselves, as they have passed out of the Cartoon Gallery at Hampton Court, will have stopped in the little ante-room, badly lighted as it is, and have studied the clever copy in chalk by Casanova. The humblest print will be found to be sufficient by those who can see. The original itself could not explain its meaning to the blind.

We are indebted for this picture, as, indeed, we are for many others which are spiritual interpretations of Holy Writ, to the Catholic Church. The Cardinal de Medicis, afterwards Pope Clement VII., availing himself of the jealousy with which Michael Angelo is supposed to have regarded the popularity of Raphael, gave to Sebastiano, who was in league with Michael Angelo, a commission to paint "The Raising of Lazarus." At the same time, he charged Raphael with the execution of "The Transfiguration." "The Raising of Lazarus" is now in our National Gallery.

The two pictures were probably painted in the spirit of rivalry, and they were exhibited together, after the death of Raphael, in the Hall of the Consistory There is between them all the difference of talent and genius. The one is evidently tainted with the vice of competition, having that peculiar look which ever betrays "the prize essay;" the other, while touched by the evil spirit, has been saved by genius from its spell. The cardinal, by sending the work of Sebastiano to his bishopric of Narbonne, (the original destination of Raphael's picture,) and by keeping "The Transfiguration" at Rome, seems to have plainly indicated his preference.

The small church of San Pietro, in Montario, a little way out of Rome, commanding a fine prospect of the city, held our picture for some 250 years. The younger Richardson thus describes it, as he saw it 150 years ago :—

"The church is very dark, the best light coming in at the door, very disadvantageous to the pictures. Over the high altar is the famous 'Transfiguration.' 'Tis painted on board, or rather on timber, being, as I remember, at least a foot thick.* The largeness may be judged of, the figures being as big as the life. 'Tis in an old frame, probably the same it had at first, and is about ten or twelve feet from the floor. I have considered it very attentively,

* Richardson is mistaken about the thickness of the panel. It consists of five boards *four inches* thick. It is said by those who have seen the picture lately that, notwithstanding the thickness of the boards, they have become warped, being slightly convex in front.

near and at a distance. The *tout ensemble* is not extremely agreeable; the two principal actions and lights are really *choquing*, much more than in any prints of it that I have seen. The shadows are all alike, and in the same degree turned black; and, in fine, the picture gives no pleasure till one comes to look into the parts nearly. Then one sees what 'tis that has made it so universally admired, for besides that at first, and before the shadows were changed, there was a greater variety of tints that delighted the eye, and delivered it pleasantly from one to another; whereas now that all the shadows are alike black—the flesh, the reds, the greens, the blues, &c.—which, instead of proper masses and reposes, are spots, and those not in beautiful shapes neither;—I say besides all this, the contours are more open and elegant, and the airs of the heads are more sublime and expressive than in any other of his works here. 'Tis painted in oil in the manner of that time, throughly wrought, and (though not to the degree as in some smaller pictures) the hair and other particulars are done with the point of the pencil."

The picture must have been in a wretched state when it was carried to Paris by the French in 1797, after they had rifled Italy during the wars of the Revolution. In the interval of its stay in Paris it was most successfully cleaned; and at the peace in 1815, it was restored and placed in the small but valuable collection of paintings in the Vatican.

"The Transfiguration," while characterised by the exquisite finish of Raphael, is distinguished from his other works in oil, by a broader treatment. The light and shade are managed with an effect rarely seen from his hand. An instance in point, (not to mention the magnificent contrast of the upper and lower parts of the picture,) will be the woman who is kneeling on the left of the demoniac. Her figure detaches itself from the ground by the strong light cutting the shadow, and this effect is strengthened in the original by the warmth of the light coming into contact with the coldness of the dark blue mantle.

"This is a picture which combines," says Mengs, "more excellences than any of the previous works of Raphael. The expression in it is more exalted and more refined, the chiaroscuro more correct, the perspective better understood, the pencilling finer, and there is a greater variety in the drapery, more grace in the heads, and more grandeur in the style." It is this characteristic combination of the greatest number of the highest merits peculiar to painting which has placed Raphael at the head of his art, and which has led this work to be regarded as his *chef-d'œuvre*.

It would, however, be idle in us, even were we fortunate enough to be in the presence of the original, to spend much of our time in the discussion of topics which belong rather to antiquaries, connoisseurs, or the profession. Any member, almost, of either of these guilds will be ready to satisfy us, if we are curious about the letter of the picture. Our work lies rather with its spirit. We can quite understand that it would be possible to detect the hand of Giulio Romano, say in the garments of the father of the demoniac, and in the plants at his feet. We might listen, but without much edification, to some one learned in pigments, and accept, without understanding it, his theory respecting the black and faded colours. We might be led to regret that we were not amongst its first spectators, but that we were born to see it after most of the glory of its earthly beauty had departed. We might in these and in many other ways lose our opportunity.

It is rather with the idea of the picture that we, as laymen, have to do; and we hope that we shall not only be able to shew that the picture is an embodiment of a spiritual truth, but that, although it is decayed and waxed old and ready to vanish away, its eye is not dim, nor its natural force abated.

In giving utterance to what we see we shall not speak with bated breath. Well aware that we may be sometimes under an illusion as to certain effects of Raphael's pictures, and be ready to attribute to him intentions of which he was unconscious, we shall treat "The Transfiguration" as a work of genius. Any fear that

might arise of our appearing to be wise above what is written here, will be allayed by the recollection of the strange suggestiveness which has ever been found to characterise the works of those who have been intrusted with this high endowment. Men of genius, more correctly than some may imagine, have often been spoken of as being moved by a kind of inspiration. It is, for instance, in this way that Raphael has received the appellation of "divine." It is this extraordinary gift which separates, as by an impassable gulf, those to whose lot this awful portion has fallen, from the mere men of talent. It is this which accounts for the difference in artists. It is this which makes the spiritual pictures of the great masters so precious and profitable to spiritual men. The great masters have been found to be great divines.

"The Transfiguration" has shared, in its measure, the fate of truth. Containing many things hard to be understood, it has been wrested by the unlearned and the unstable; it has been rejected and ridiculed by those who are only connoisseurs; it has been at some times blindly admired by the multitude, and at all times received and understood by the few. The harmony of its mighty and wondrous contrast has been hidden from the wise and prudent, while its unity has been revealed to babes.

The singleness of its purpose does not seem to have been denied in the early days of its history, though it is possible that objection on this ground may have been taken by some of the partisans of Michael Angelo, who wished, in this way, to turn the popular attention and favour towards the rival picture of Sebastiano. The painter's treatment of his subject soon, however, came to be regarded by some as a piece of artistic foolishness. Its unorthodox division has always been a stumbling-block to the scribes and pharisees of art. We have read somewhere of one of this Sanhedrim, who recommended that the Alexandrian method of dealing with a difficulty should be adopted, and that the picture should be cut in halves.

The picture need not, of course, be touched. A little faith and

patience will lead us into all its truth. There is method in its madness. The twofold action represents the mysterious antagonism between good and evil in this present state. The schism in the picture, the first feature which strikes an observer, and the only one seen by many, is a reflection of the awful discord in human nature, and the perplexing confusion of blessings and curses in the human lot. It is this palpable opposition of conflicting elements which has so often raised doubts respecting a Providence, many observers of life living in the misery of treating as an open question the existence of a supreme power, others summarily denying the being of an Almighty God, and arbitrarily adopting the heathenish notion of a double dynasty.

The seeming fault of the picture is its real excellence. The merest tyro in art can perceive that one of the most common rules of composition has been broken. The transgression is not to be attributed to what has been termed the waywardness of genius, any more than it is to be regarded as an oversight. It was necessary and intentional. Before we leave the picture, we hope to shew that the method by which Raphael chose to treat his subject presents the truth that it declares with a rare adaptation to certain minds. As for ourselves, we never stipulate as to the way by which we are to be led into any truth. Beggars should be no choosers. We are amongst those who believe in the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord; and if there be one fact which we desire to know above all others, it is this one—that Jesus is the Son of God. We have found it to be possible, in the light of His divinity, to see some light in this dark and confused world. As we look at its sin and its misery we would be saved from staggering through unbelief, even though we may be saved in an irregular way.

Many seem to pass through this awful state without perceiving, or at least without feeling, the discord in their nature and the perplexity of their lot. To these, whose spiritual sensitiveness is of a very low order, this picture will be a word in an unknown tongue. Others are called by the Providence of God in their temperament

and lot, to live face to face with the conflicting elements of good and evil, both within and without. To these it will be a word in season. Temptations differ. The sin that easily besets this latter class is to restrain prayer before God and to lose hold of His word. Looking at the things seen and temporal, looking away from the things unseen and eternal, they turn sick, and faint and stagger through unbelief. Provision, however, is made for such cases. Every possible means is adopted by Him who is keeping them from falling, that their faith fail not.

There are two suppositions, both equally gratuitous, which have given some appearance of reason to the many adverse criticisms which have been passed upon this picture. It has been supposed that it was the intention of Raphael merely to represent the scene of the transfiguration. The lower portion has also been described as the *cure* of the demoniac. The practical character of revelation was too well known to our painter, and his knowledge of the gospel history was too exact to allow him to fall into either of these errors. He has doubtless represented two events, but he was justified in doing so, since they transpired at the same time, and their simultaneous exhibition would assist him in giving, in a remarkably happy way, the practical lesson of this episode in the life of our Lord.

This picture has retained the name which it at first received. Notwithstanding its two great divisions, which are most palpable, and the predominating effect of the undermost portion, produced by the number and size of the figures, Raphael was still justified in calling his work "The Transfiguration." In spite of the continued criticisms of centuries, the faith of the world in our master has remained unshaken, and the name of the picture has remained unaltered. The fact that the picture has been able to maintain its title for so long a period and under such trying circumstances, is a sufficient proof that its name is not a misnomer. Any unprejudiced observer may verify its propriety. He has only to turn even to a print, and his eye is at once caught by the blaze of light which shines out so mysteriously from the upper portion. He is thus led to our Lord,

whose figure is the central object, and if he has the slightest acquaintance with the facts of the gospel narrative, he is reminded of the transfiguration.

The boldness of the genius of the painter is shewn by the character of the subject which he has chosen, and the wisdom of his genius is manifested by the manner of his treatment. The subject is one of the many things connected with revelation which are hard to be understood: it passeth knowledge. The transfiguration perplexes human thought, and baffles human expression.

The difficulties connected with this fact in the history of our Lord, and the dangers attending any representation of it, have often led to its cowardly and culpable neglect. The Scripture containing the record is frequently passed over by preachers—the difficulties disheartening the idle, and the dangers frightening the timorous.

In this state of things we have to be thankful that we are summoned by a painter to ponder over this event, and we shall see that we have further cause for gratitude in the manner in which he brings it before us. He has wisely *suggested* the scene, rather than made an abortive attempt at its exact representation.

By a wise falsification, the great masters often got at their true conclusions by not shewing the actual appearances,—all that was to be seen at any given moment by an indifferent eye, but what the eye might be supposed to see in the doing or suffering of some portentous action.

It may be well, just at this point, to refresh our memories with the details of the gospel story. A week before the transfiguration, (and the sacred historians seem to wish us to pay especial notice to the date,) our Lord had withdrawn to the region of Cæsarea Philippi, where the apostle Peter had declared his belief in our Lord as the promised Messiah. "From that time Jesus began to shew unto his disciples, and to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day." This declaration elicited the imperfection of the apostle's faith, and the worldliness of the

apostle's heart, and led him, with his natural impetuosity, to betray his expectation of the temporal character of the Messiah's kingdom, and to take our Lord and begin to rebuke Him. The familiarity of Peter was received by our Lord in a manner which reminds us of the severity with which He often treated the members of the Sanhedrim, and occasioned the enunciation of that mighty argument against worldliness which is found at the close of the 16th chapter of Matthew.

Nothing further, at that time, seems to have been said. Seven days' silence was kept. The slowness of the apostles to believe could not be quickened by any words. Something must be done. It was exactly a week after this (a double provision having been made in the record against any mistake occurring in reference to the date) that the transfiguration took place.

The transfiguration of our Lord is not so unique an event in His history as it may at first sight appear. It belongs to a series of similar manifestations. We are clearly taught, both from the Gospels and the Epistles, that our Lord was ever and anon manifesting forth His glory Again and again His disciples were being reminded that although He was the Son of man, He was still the Son of God. Peter and John, two of the three witnesses who were selected in this instance as spectators, are constantly alluding to the fact that they often beheld His glory. John begins his Gospel with this testimony, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." * In the second chapter we read again, "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him."† He concludes his history with a reference to the object for which it was written, "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."‡

* John i. 14. † Chap. ii. 11 ‡ Chap. xx. 31.

Peter, in his Second Epistle, makes special reference to this event, and the particular purpose it was intended to answer, "For we have not followed cunningly-devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount."*

The transfiguration is not only to be regarded as one of those facts which prove to us the divinity of our Saviour, possessing the same purpose as the other manifestations of His glory ; but it will be seen, after a little study, to partake of the same practical character, and to have transpired under similar circumstances. There was a law observed in these revelations. A provision was made, that whenever any events occurred which especially proved the humanity of our Lord, they should always be accompanied by some signs which should specially declare His divinity. His birth, for instance, was followed by "the glory of Jehovah" shining on the shepherds. The heavens opened upon the Saviour, and the voice from heaven was heard testifying at the time of His baptism, and immediately before His temptation. His death was preceded by a supernatural darkness, and it was followed by an earthquake. His grave was visited by an angel, whose "countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow, and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men."†

The transfiguration was a part of that manifestation for the world, accredited by witnesses, which was to serve as the basis for the faith of all Christendom in the divine nature of their Redeemer. It was no mere pageant. It bears on its face the divine stamp. It partakes of the practical character of all revelation, and while specially adapted to meet the wants of the apostles who were called to be

* 2 Pet. i. 16–18.

† Matt. xxviii. 3, 4.

witnesses, it serves to make known to any and to all of us who it is in whom we have believed.

It is possible that the scene may have transpired on Mount Tabor. Some, forgetting the lapse of time, have imagined that our Lord must necessarily have been in Cæsarea Philippi, or its immediate neighbourhood. The silence of the historians in reference to the place, proves that the question of locality is but of little moment. The three disciples, who have been once and again separated from their brethren, are taken as listeners and spectators. It is also worthy of notice that those who are now selected to witness the special glory of our Lord, were afterwards chosen again to witness His special humiliation. The scene in the garden of Gethsemane is complementary to the scene of the transfiguration. They form together a pair of pictures which, perhaps, should never be separated. They represent facts which, perhaps, will never be understood.

The circumstances, as far as we can trace them, appear to have been these :—The change in the countenance of our Lord seems to have taken place "as he prayed." "And it came to pass that as he was praying, he was transfigured before them. The appearance of his face became different, and his face shone as the sun, and his garments became shining, white as the light and glistering, exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller could whiten." This manifestation of glory is not to be confounded with the glory of the Father, but it is rather to be received as a symbol of the personal divinity of our Lord.

The apostles, as in Gethsemane, are heavy with sleep, their drowsiness being accounted for, in both instances, by the fact that it was night. The glory of the Lord awakens the sleeping disciples, and they become aware of the presence of two men, whom they find to be talking with the Saviour. Listening, they discover the topic of conversation to be the subject which had been brought before them a week ago; and, perhaps from the manner in which it is treated by the two strangers, they perceive that they are none other but Moses and Elijah.

Strange and incredible as the doctrine of a suffering Messiah was to the disciples, it was thus shewn to be an accepted, though inexplicable fact, with the inhabitants of the invisible world. "The decease to be accomplished at Jerusalem" would still be a mystery to the representatives of the Law and the Prophets; for the angels themselves are represented in Revelation as looking into the scheme of human redemption, desiring to comprehend what evidently passeth their knowledge. The vision would serve many subsidiary purposes. It would prevent the apostles from confounding our Lord with Elijah or with Moses. They would be the more able to perceive the unity of the old and the new dispensations, and the scene would not only enable them to be hereafter witnesses for Christ as the Son of God, but in its measure it would tend to loosen those prejudices which prevented them, in common with their countrymen, from receiving the kingdom of God.

It is worthy of note, that while the disciples were evidently awed by the glory of Christ, they were not entirely overwhelmed. Peter, though he hardly knows what he is saying, is still able to speak, and it was while he was talking, and the vision was fading, that the ancient symbol of the Divine presence appears. The Shechinah, the "bright cloud" of the wilderness, sweeps over the mountain, the apostles (like the keepers at the Saviour's tomb, and like John in Patmos, when he saw the Lord) are smitten down, and become as dead men. "And a voice came out of the cloud, which said. This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye him."

This is the moment of the picture. The very instant has been seized. Two of the apostles are completely blinded. John is shewn shading his eyes, and in the act of falling. Peter and James have been flung to the ground. James crouches, and with folded hands deprecates the death which he feels must follow the presence of God. Moses and Elias, after ages of glory, can "see his face and live." With unblenched gaze they still are "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of their faith."

Painters and poets, in their representations of Deity and the in-

habitants of the world of light, have clothed them with light. The glory of that world shines around their heads as a rainbow, or their whole bodies are seen shining in the midst of an aureole, whether circular, oval, eliptical, or square. Raphael has clad our Lord in a cloud of light. Dante has given the name of " rose " to those circular expansions of light, in which the saints are represented ranged in divine effulgence, emanating from the centre, which is filled by the splendour and brilliancy of God himself. These "glories" are evidently related to the sacred fire of the East, the Jewish Shechinah, and the symbolic light of the Revelation.

"The glory of the Lord," which we learn from the record of previous and following appearances, was as full of motion as it was of light, (hovering as a dove or flickering as a flame,) catches Moses and Elijah, and makes them the sport of its power. Our Lord remains stationary. Unmoved and rapt for a moment, listening to His God who has not forsaken Him, He is displayed in unclouded splendour. The shameful death of the cross is despised and forgotten in the vision of the glory of the Father.

It is probable that the peculiar length of the pictures required for altar-pieces may have led Raphael to his design for the Transfiguration. Necessity is the mother of invention. It is certain that our painter must have been somewhat perplexed with the exceptional proportions of the panel, and having determined upon a subject where the scene is laid on a mountain, he would hardly see, at first, how it would be possible and expedient to overcome the effect of a blank elevation. His knowledge of Scripture and the spirituality of his purpose would come to his rescue. In a moment of inspiration, we can imagine, the finished picture would be presented to his mind's eye, and with the confidence of genius, supported both by the spirit and letter of Revelation, he would determine to risk the penalty of transgressing artistic law, if by any means he could embody his idea.

Reading the record, he would find that the failure of the nine apostles to cast out the devil from the demoniac boy, synchronised

with the transfiguration of our Lord. He would thus be in possession of matter which he might legitimately introduce, and he could see at once that the circumstances connected with the scene would more than supply all his need. There would be furnished, for instance, the element of contrast. He would be able, also, to suggest to the spectator the greater height of the mountain by crowding its base with numerous figures; and what is of more importance, at any rate, to us, he would be able to expound the practical character of this revelation, so painting the text and the context for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of this scripture, might have hope.

The scene depicted in the lower portion is not, as some of those have supposed who have objected to the double action, the *cure* of the demoniac; nor is it the *presentation* of the woful case to the apostles. The crowd are not bringing the child, nor are the disciples attempting to cast out the devil. Those moments have passed. The despair painted on the face of the father, the turbulent and malicious rejoicing of the scribes, and, above all, the disappointment and confusion of the apostles, plainly point to another period. The apostles have tried their power, and are here represented as having failed.

In expounding the meaning of the picture, and in our reading of some of its details, we are aware that we shall lay ourselves open to the charge of being wise above what is written. While, however, it would ill become us to be positive about the purpose of the painter, there is no reason that we should be diffident in our acknowledgment of his power.

In the two scenes brought before us, we seem to be reminded not only of the mixed character of this life, but, by the strange nearness of the top of the mountain to the ground, we have evidently set forth the fact, that the higher and lower worlds are more nearly connected than some people suppose. In looking at the picture, the eye catches now the glorified figure of our Lord, and then the distorted form of the demoniac. In a moment (and as no words could

describe it) we see the same human nature evidently under the power of the devil, and as evidently under the power of God. We find ourselves standing where we can almost see into the heights of heaven and into the depths of hell.

In the writhing limbs and knotted muscles of the possessed child, whose very hair seems to be rolling in agony—whose countenance is out of keeping with ordinary madness, and whose whole body is shaken with something else beside ordinary convulsions—who is struggling with a supernatural strength in the arms of his wretched parent, we have the devil incarnate. We are filled with fear and trembling as we remember that this is but a faint picture of that more awful possession, by which the spirit of evil works in the children of disobedience, and leads them about captive at his will.

Turning in the direction in which the demoniac has unconsciously thrown up his arms as he groans, (travailing in pain with the whole of creation,) we are brought face to face with our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. In His glorified body, as it is evidently transfigured before us, we see God incarnate; we are reminded of the faith and hope of the gospel, that the Son of God was manifested to destroy the works of the devil. We know that, on the morrow, the boy was cured; and as we agonise under our own sins and sorrows, and the sins and sorrows of others, waiting for our redemption, the picture helps us in patience to possess our souls. We are saved from staggering through unbelief by "that blessed hope, even the glorious appearing of our Lord."

We need hardly refer to the lesson taught by the discomfited and disgraced disciples. They form a picture which might serve to represent the degraded position in which some professors and societies are found, who are evidently failing, through unbelief, in the fulfilment of their mission. The figure of the apostle with the open volume, whose hands and feet form projecting points which press themselves upon our notice, is very suggestive. One cannot help thinking of the "book-form" of godliness, and the futile attempts

which are sometimes made to exorcise the evil spirits of society by read prayers and read sermons.

The woman kneeling in the foreground has been introduced for the sake of effect. It is said by some that no historical picture can be perfect without the female form. Raphael, however, here perhaps wished to relieve the feelings of the spectator from the distress occasioned by the sight of so much misery. He has thus introduced the flowing lines of a woman's face, hair, and drapery as a foil, just as in his cartoon of "The Beautiful Gate" he has placed a lovely babe in juxtaposition with the gnarled head of the old beggar.

The woman has been taken for a sister of the demoniac. We know, however, that he was an only child, and if we did not, it might be easily seen that neither this woman is a relation, nor even the one who is on his other side. The Fornarina is said to have sat for this portrait, and Raphael appears to have been thinking of her while he was painting this figure, much more than of the purpose of his picture.

The face of the father speaks volumes; he looks as if he had long borne his burden alone. His trouble and desolation seem to have made him half a woman, and if we may judge the character of his companions from their appearance, we can easily account for that expression of self-contained misery which has settled upon his countenance.

The picture is blacker than even in three hundred years it ought to have been. This is accounted for by the nature of a pigment used by Raphael, which, while producing a temporary transparency, quickly and irremediably deadened and darkened his work.

Kneeling, half-hidden under the trees on the mount, there are two figures which are unquestionably out of place. They are two ecclesiastics, St Julian and St Lawrence, introduced at the request of Cardinal de Medici, in honour of his father, Julian, and his uncle, Lorenzo the Magnificent.

EXPOSITIONS OF GREAT PICTURES.

No. III.

The Resurrection of Lazarus.

"Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him. The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there. Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled. And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him! And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? Jesus therefore again groaning in himself, cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go."—John xi. 30–44.

THE RESURRECTION OF LAZARUS.

'When Lazarus left his charnel cave,
And home to Mary's house return'd,
Was this demanded—if he groan'd
To hear her weeping by his grave?

"Where wert thou, brother, those four days?
There lives no record of reply,
Which, telling what it is to die,
Had surely added praise to praise.

"From every house the neighbours met,
The streets were filled with joyful sound,
A solemn gladness even crown'd
The purple brows of Olivet.

"Behold a man raised up by Christ!
The rest remaineth unreveal'd—
He told it not: or something seal'd
The lips of that Evangelist."

TENNYSON.

THOSE of our readers who are acquainted with the history of this picture will be expecting it to form the subject of our third exposition. Notwithstanding their surprise that it should ever have appeared as a rival by the side of "The Transfiguration," they will remember the circumstances under which it was painted, and feel the necessity that is laid upon us to place these works together again. We should, however, have held ourselves almost excused from hanging this "Raising of Lazarus" in our gallery of great pictures, had we not been assured by Dr Waagen that it is "the most important specimen of the Italian school now in England," and by another authority that it is "the second picture in the world."

The opinion of these professionals will perplex many of the visitors of our National Gallery, as they stand before this large dark canvas; there seeming to be only one point in which they, as laymen, can perceive the two works of the rival painters will bear comparison. Both having been intended for altar-pieces, they are evidently, as far as their size is concerned, equally great pictures, measuring exactly twelve feet six inches in height, and differing only a few inches in breadth. The comparison, in our opinion, had better end there.

Most critics concur in believing that "The Raising of Lazarus" was the joint production of Michael Angelo and Sebastian del Piombo, though few of them agree as to the extent to which the master assisted his disciple. Some assert that Michael Angelo furnished the complete design, and others that he actually painted the Lazarus; while those who are aware that he was absent from Rome when this picture was in progress, seem only to see his hand in the modelling of the Lazarus, and conjecture that he merely gave Sebastian the cartoon of that figure.

The partnership in the picture is a matter of history. There was nothing peculiar in it. Many other paintings of Sebastian were executed from the designs of Michael Angelo, and many other artists, besides Sebastian, were only too glad to be assisted in the same way.

There is sufficient ground to believe that the two painters united their talents in this work, with the view of eclipsing Raphael. It would appear that comparisons were often being instituted between the great master of Design and the great master of Expression, and that, especially after the simultaneous exhibition of their works in the Vatican, discussions were rife as to their relative merits. This party spirit was pandered to by their patrons and their pupils, and Michael Angelo, notwithstanding his high position, was not above the besetting sin of his profession; but he appears, with the well-known susceptibility and jealousy of an artist, to have envied the popularity of Raphael, and to have caballed with Sebastian against

him. Raphael is reported to have been marvellously free from the power of this evil spirit. This absence of envy is in perfect keeping with his character, and might be almost argued from the spirit and power of "The Transfiguration." It is plainly shewn by a remark which he made when he heard of the conspiracy, "I rejoice," said he, "at the favour Michael Angelo does me, since he proves therein that he thinks me worthy to compete with himself, and not with Sebastian." While the two schemers are generally acknowledged to have failed in their object, they are still regarded as having produced between them a remarkable work. This could hardly have been avoided, as the picture is a combination of the finest school of design, with the finest school of colour. It is to this, perhaps, that it owes its preciousness with the profession.

The common effect produced by "The Raising of Lazarus" upon the ordinary spectator is that of oppressiveness and disappointment. It may be that most visitors forget the darkening tendency of time, and come to the gallery unprepared for the obscurity in which centuries have hidden the greater part of the design. The fame, the well-known title, and the equally familiar story of the picture will have naturally excited the highest expectations, and the spectators approach almost certain of seeing our Lord, and being present at the very moment when he is raising Lazarus from the dead. They are doomed to be disappointed.

The point of sight having been placed in the background, spectators are at first carried away by it toward Jerusalem, and it is some time before their attention can be turned. Coming back and looking again, they find they are too late. The miracle has been already wrought. They now observe the most prominent group in the crowded canvas, and in the centre of it they discover Lazarus full of life and motion. They cannot help watching him as he struggles to free himself from the bondage of the grave-clothes; and, as they do so, they almost forget to look for the figure of the Saviour. It would be quite as well for them if they did not turn their heads.

The oppressiveness of the picture is caused, partly, by the blackening effect of age on the shadows, and by the accumulation of dirt over the whole súrface; partly by the unusual number of figures which have been introduced, and by the great want of breadth, though the trees ought to have flung their shadows across the picture, and the principal persons might have been thus grouped into masses. The great heaviness of the picture is, however, chiefly to be attributed to the point of sight having been placed high up in the background, far above the heads of the chief actors in the scene. There is also a sad want of aerial perspective; and while the form of the Lazarus plainly marks the era when painting was taking lessons in modelling from sculpture, the spotty and confused effect of the picture betrays that it was painted in the early ages of chiaro-oscuro.

It has been felt by some that the time of the picture has been injudiciously chosen. They have regretted that the moment of the miracle has been permitted to pass. We, however, are thankful that we are not required, by this picture, to dwell upon the sublime theme of our Lord's power over death. We should have been sorry to have had such a subject brought before us, by men who were working under the influence of the most pitiable of passions. Our attention is rather to be given to Lazarus, and to the consequences that resulted from his resurrection. Michael Angelo has made this possible, for we have Lazarus so evidently set forth, that you almost imagine that the painter must have seen him when our Lord uttered the words "Loose him, and let him go." Nothing, however, that Sebastian has done here, would ever lead you for one moment to suppose that he had witnessed the scene. Arguing from his figure of our Saviour, you would say at once that he had never seen the Lord; and looking at his work, you cannot help feeling afraid, that if he had attempted to depict the miracle, you would never have been inspired by him to recall the home, the sickness, the death, and the resurrection of "him whom Jesus loved."

With the exception of not being disappointed, we are reminded by this "*great* picture" of the effect produced upon us when some special occasion has compelled us to listen to a *great* sermon. We could tell from the manner and the method of the preacher that we were expected to be deeply impressed with the truth that was advertised as the subject of his discourse; but, instead, we were shocked at his spirit of self-assertion, ashamed of his portrait of our Lord, and oppressed and disgusted with his elaborate efforts to produce an effect. As long as he was reading or mandating, and for some time after, it seemed as if it would have been almost a sacrilege even to think of the topic which he had taken for his sermon.

If you come to this picture as the Jews came to Bethany, to see Lazarus after he was raised from the dead, you will be then well repaid for your trouble. The miracle is complete. Lazarus is thoroughly alive. Every muscle is in motion. You find him half sitting on the edge of the tomb, with the appearance of a man who has been just suddenly awoke out of sleep. He looks as if he were trying to shake off the dreams as well as the garments of the grave. He is gazing with wonder and a new awe upon our Lord, having evidently now the testimony of the invisible world to his divinity. The contrast between Lazarus and those who have witnessed the miracle, serves to shew that no work, however mighty, is sufficient to reveal the true nature and character of our Lord; we are reminded that, until we have died, we shall never know Him as He is.

The shadow and silence of death which shroud his face, suggests the spell referred to by Tennyson, in the poem we have placed at the head of our paper, and the legend of the unbroken solemnity of his second life. There is something very fearful in his appearance, and we can quite understand how, for the moment, Martha turns from him, almost wishing that he had not risen, just as before she had wished that he had not died. The wonder and awe of the raised man are mingled with impatience. He yet feels the presence of some of the relics of the bondage of corruption, and Michael

Angelo, whose forte was energy, and who has never been surpassed in depicting the human body in motion, has evidently delighted in depicting the struggle between the death that yet lingers in the grave-clothes, and the life which teems in every muscle.

There is no question but what Michael Angelo designed the figure of Lazarus. Two of his drawings of it were in the possession of Sir Thomas Lawrence, and they are now in the collection at the Hague. There is as little doubt that Michael Angelo restored the broken torso of Apollonius, and adapted it to his purpose. The right knee and thigh are elevated at the same angle, and the same line is formed by the drapery over the left leg. The body has identically the same twist—the shoulders are in the same position, and the neck bends over to the same side.* The figure of the Lazarus may be taken as an exponent of the peculiar service rendered by Michael Angelo to painting, and of the obligations that he himself was under to the statuary of the ancients.

The Christ stands on a slab some six or eight inches in height, (perhaps the stone which lay upon the cave,) and appears to have just issued the direction to the bystanders, "Loose him, and let him go." Sebastian seems to have confessed, by this artificial expedient of giving elevation to the figure of our Lord, that he felt that the figure was a failure. Nothing, however, is of any avail. The Christ, when compared with the Lazarus, is too short, and, having no command of the horizon, it stands in a position in which it would be impossible to invest it with any power. The divided action of the arms and hands adds the unpleasant impression of indecision to that of weakness. We know Him in whom we have believed, and we feel that this is no likeness.

Some have found fault with the appearance of the spectators. They had expected to have seen them overwhelmed with the manifestation of the glory of the Lord. Only three or four, out of the

* Those of our readers who wish to verify this interesting fact may easily do so, as a copy of this well-known torso can be obtained for a trifle from almost any plaster-cast maker.

thirty or forty, are represented as feeling in any measure the grandeur of the event. We are inclined to think that the painter, in this case, has succeeded in depicting things as they were. The crowd, with the exception of the disciple John, are mainly Jews from Jerusalem; many of them are Pharisees, some are evidently members of the Sanhedrim, and most are of that class who would not be persuaded though one rose from the dead.

The apostle John has been, doubtless, introduced by Sebastian, because he is the only evangelist who records this history. He stands behind our Lord in green and orange drapery, with an admirably painted profile, answering objections. The old man at our Lord's left hand is a favourite figure with Michael Angelo, and appears in many of his designs. The one in front is so stiff with age that he can hardly kneel, and his hands tremble together as he folds them in the attitude of worship. The Mary is a success. She is in her right place, kneeling with uplifted countenance at the feet of our Lord in solemn wonder, with an utter absence of incredulity or nervousness. Her foreshortened arm stands out bodily from the canvas.

The background is full of detail. In the middle distance, to the left, is seen a group of Pharisees in eager discussion. Beyond them, to the right, is a bridge leading to the city, and in the extreme distance there are women washing clothes in the river. On the right we have a high priest, perhaps intended for Caiaphas, (as his name is mentioned in the context of the sacred record,) descending the steps of the Necropolis, accompanied by some partizans. The mourning women, whose "avocation's gone," stand apart under the trees.

The picture, as we stated in the paper on "The Transfiguration," was sent to the cathedral of Narbonne, and remained there till it was purchased by the Duke of Orleans, early in the eighteenth century, for 24,000 francs. It was brought to England with the rest of his gallery, and was purchased by Mr Angerstein for 3500 guineas on the first morning of the exhibition, at which only the patrons of

the art were admitted. He was offered £15,000 for it by Mr Beckford, of Fonthill, but the negotiation failed, as he insisted upon guineas. The French Government, when they were in possession of "The Transfiguration," wished also for it, and made an offer of £10,000, (or, as some say, £20,000,) but their offer was refused.

The perilous process of transferring the picture from panel to canvas was performed in 1771. The original surface of the master was thus necessarily lost, and besides the restoration which the picture underwent at this time, it is known to have been repainted in many places by West.

Sebastian, while an excellent colourist, was, after all, only a portrait painter. His deep, rich-toned draperies of the front figures attest his eye for colour, while his portrait of himself with the Cardinal Ippolito de Medici, in the National Gallery, proves his power of holding his own in the lower branch of the art. His proper name was Sebastiano Luciano, but on being appointed to the office of affixing the seal of lead (*piombo*) to the Papal ordinances, he received the appellation by which he is now most commonly known, Sebastian del Piombo.

EXPOSITIONS OF GREAT PICTURES.

No. IV.

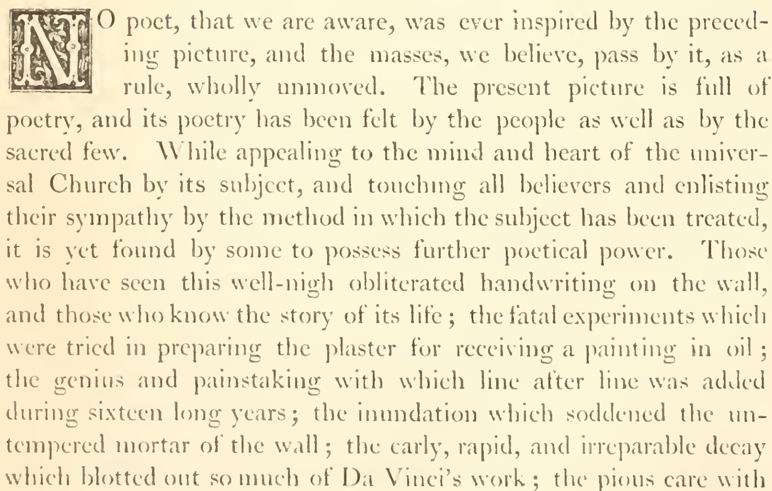
The Last Supper.

"Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover? And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover. Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve. And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I? And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born. Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said."—MATT. xxvi. 17–25.

THE LAST SUPPER.

"Though searching damps and many an envious flaw
Have marr'd this work ; the calm, ethereal grace,
The love deep-seated in the Saviour's face,
The mercy, goodness, have not fail'd to awe
The elements ; as they do melt and thaw
The heart of the beholder, and erase
(At least for one rapt moment) every trace
Of disobedience to the primal law.
The annunciation of the dreadful truth,
Made to the Twelve, survives : lip, forehead, cheek,
And hand reposing on the board in ruth
Of what it utters, while the unguilty seek
Unquestionable meanings—still bespeak
A labour worthy of eternal youth !"

WORDSWORTH.



NO poet, that we are aware, was ever inspired by the preceding picture, and the masses, we believe, pass by it, as a rule, wholly unmoved. The present picture is full of poetry, and its poetry has been felt by the people as well as by the sacred few. While appealing to the mind and heart of the universal Church by its subject, and touching all believers and enlisting their sympathy by the method in which the subject has been treated, it is yet found by some to possess further poetical power. Those who have seen this well-nigh obliterated handwriting on the wall, and those who know the story of its life ; the fatal experiments which were tried in preparing the plaster for receiving a painting in oil ; the genius and painstaking with which line after line was added during sixteen long years ; the inundation which soddened the untempered mortar of the wall ; the early, rapid, and irreparable decay which blotted out so much of Da Vinci's work ; the pious care with

which the cartoons of the artist's design have been preserved; and the unusual frequency with which the picture has been copied and engraved; only those who have thus known the chequered history of the picture have fully felt its poetry.

The history of the picture is a poem in itself, and we would therefore beg our readers to turn a while from the photograph, and duly prepare themselves for our exposition, by looking into the memoirs of the original, and refreshing their memories with the incidents of its moving tale.

"The Last Supper" was one of the few finished works of Leonardo da Vinci. It was undertaken by order of Lodovico Sforza il Moro, Regent, and afterwards Duke of Milan, who was anxious to enrich the city with some of the productions of a man who, judging from a letter that he had written offering his services, seemed to be in the possession of the most varied and eminent abilities. The precise period when Leonardo commenced this picture is not correctly ascertained, but we know that it was carried on simultaneously with an equestrian statue of colossal proportions, intended to have been cast in bronze, in memory of Francesco Sforza, the father of Lodovico. These two undertakings were eminently calculated to elicit the powers of the artist, Da Vinci having studied most profoundly the expression of the human face, and the anatomy of the horse. The fate of the statue was equally tragical with the fate of the picture. When the first model of the monument was finished, it was carried in triumph in a festal procession, as the most splendid part of the pomp, and was unfortunately broken. With unwearied patience, Leonardo began a new one, but it was never cast; and when Milan was conquered by the French in 1499, the model was made to serve as a target by the Gascon crossbowmen, in the same way as, in 1796, the heads in "The Last Supper" (notwithstanding the order of Napoleon) were fired at by the French troops who were quartered in the room which it decorated.

The place chosen to receive the picture was one of the end walls of the dining-room of a monastery which had been built twenty

years previously for a fraternity of Dominican Friars, belonging to a church dedicated to the Virgin Mary, and styled Delle Grazia. The monastery is now destroyed, and the refectory is a large apartment, 116 feet long, 29 feet wide, and of a lofty height. The door is in the centre, and the windows are high and irregularly placed. The wilderness aspect which is now presented by the room is in striking contrast to its appearance when it was inhabited by the holy fathers. They evidently did their best to make it snug and comfortable, whitewashing the picture over, so that their privacy should not be intruded upon by the strangers, who, with troublesome curiosity, were constantly visiting the convent, desirous to see this extraordinary work of art; and opening a doorway through the lower part of it, (cutting off the feet of our Lord,) for the greater convenience of carrying in their dinner *hot* from the kitchen.

Leonardo was a universal genius, and, like most of his class, was fond of experiments. Determining to execute his work in oil-colour, instead of fresco, in order that he might have the opportunity of carefully finishing the minutest details, he tried various compositions for his ground; and at last prepared it with pitch, mastic, and plaster, overlaying it with a cement of burnt clay and ochre, which, being mixed up with varnish, formed a colouring of great beauty, but short duration. The reflecting surface of oil is one of its most objectionable qualities, but this may be avoided by the ground being made absorbent. If the wall be not properly dried, or if from any other cause the painted surface forms itself into a skin separable from the lime, destruction is sure and rapid. The decay of the Cenacolo hardly affords a fair criterion of the durability of oil for wall painting, since Leonardo was sixteen years engaged on it; and during that long period must have repainted much. The materials of the wall are known to have been inferior; its position between the kitchen and the dining-hall was by no means favourable; and the inundation of 1500 must have been a severe ordeal. We are not surprised, after knowing these facts, that the picture began to fall in small flakes from the wall, and that in fifty years after it was

painted it is reported to have been half wasted and destroyed. While mourning over these misfortunes, we have to be thankful that there were those who would not willingly let it die. In the time of Leonardo many successful copies were made by his pupils. One of the most accurate, by Marco d'Oggione, is in the Academy in London, and the engravers, guided by the cartoons, have preserved for us the general idea, at least, of "The Last Supper."

The cartoon of the whole picture is unfortunately lost. The cartoons of the single heads happily remain. These are executed in black chalk, and are slightly coloured. A sketch for the head of the Christ, on a now torn and soiled piece of paper, is preserved in the gallery of the Brera, in Milan. This faded drawing gives but a faint idea of what the master accomplished, only suggesting by its lines that mingled expression of divine gentleness, pain at the perfidy of one of His own disciples, and resignation to His approaching death. Ten heads of the apostles, some of them of enchanting beauty, are in the collection of the King of Holland, at the Hague; three others are in private collections in England. Several slight sketches are in the academy at Venice, and an original drawing, a study for the whole composition, is in the imperial collection at Paris.

Francis I. of France, entering Milan in triumph in 1515, purchased Da Vinci's portrait of the beautiful Lisa (now in the Louvre) for the enormous price of 4000 crowns, being a sum equivalent to 45,000 francs in money of this day, and tried hard, if it were possible, to saw "The Last Supper" from the wall. The removal of wall-painted pictures, impossible as it would appear to be, has been effected, and if the Emperor had succeeded in his attempt, we should doubtless have found the original to be in a vastly superior condition. It has now become a point in Italy to remove frescoes of interest for the purposes of sale or preservation. The method adopted is to cover the face of the fresco with a linen cloth, dressed with a kind of glue. It is then carefully detached, the rough surface rubbed down with pumice-stone, and a canvas fastened to the back, and then treated as an oil picture.

It is difficult to reconcile the conflicting statements which have been made by the various visitors respecting the decay of this painting. Vasari tells us that by his time (1566) it was lamentably injured. Scanelli, who saw it in 1642, observes that "there are but few vestiges remaining of the figures; and the naked parts, such as the heads, hands, and feet, are almost entirely obliterated." Some years before 1726, when the picture was restored, Richardson writes:—"In the refectory, over a very high door, is the famous picture of 'The Last Supper.' Figures as big as the life; it is excessively ruined, and all the apostles on the right hand of the Christ are entirely defaced. The Christ and those on His left hand appear pretty plain, but the colours are quite faded, and in several places only the bare wall is left; that which is next but one to the Christ is the best preserved, (he that crosses his hands upon his breast,) and has a marvellous expression, much stronger than I have seen in any of the drawings. Armenini (who wrote about the year 1580) says this picture was half spoiled in his time. That story of the head of the Christ being left unfinished, Leonardo conceiving it impossible for him to reach his own idea is certainly false; because one part of that head which remains entire is highly finished in his usual manner. They have nailed the emperor's arms over the Christ's head, so low that it almost touches His hair, and hides a great part of the picture."

Michael Angelo Bellotti was the first who had the presumption to repair the picture, repainting it in 1726, under cover of the pretence that he was in possession of a secret which enabled him to renew the colours. At a later period, Giorgone was solicited to re-touch the picture, a task which he modestly declined. In the year 1772 they found a painter less diffident, Muzza, who nearly accomplished its utter destruction. He boldly brushed off the surface of the painting wherever it interrupted his progress, laying on a new ground of paste, mastic, burnt umber, and ochre on the parts which he meant to repair. He had nearly finished the whole, St Thomas, Matthias, and Simon alone were left untouched, (and they were in the course

of execution,) when a new prior (Paul Galloni) saved them from his barbarous hands. In the year 1797, Beauharnois, at that time Viceroy of Milan, ordered the refectory to be repaired, and defended the picture by the erection of a low, wooden gallery, on which the spectator is placed to view it.

It is now in such a state, that it is even a matter of dispute whether it was originally painted in oil, fresco, or tempora. The central part has stood the best, and best of all the part around and beneath the left hand of our Lord. The face itself has not suffered from accident or mischief, but the colouring is, of course, much lowered by time. There is a white gap in the neck, which cannot be seen without exciting gratitude in the spectator that it did not occur a few inches higher up. These are the points which evidently caught the eye of Wordsworth, and awakened his muse. All that part of the picture which is below the table-cloth is in complete obscurity.

There are two or three points which should be remembered by us as we turn to look at this picture, or otherwise we may repeat some of the foolish and threadbare criticisms which are still current among superficial spectators. The long table, covered with a white cloth, on which the apostles are *seated*, was only the other day a stumbling-block to a clergyman who was looking at an exquisite copy of this great work. We would have forgiven him had he stayed and tried to see something else besides this patent impropriety. Da Vinci, in undertaking the decoration of the refectory of a convent was not only confined to the subject of "The Last Supper," that being the orthodox ornament, but he was obliged to accept the conventional mode of treatment. He had no power of altering the arrangement of the table, or the position of the guests. Instead of parading our knowledge of the manners and customs of the East, and blaming the artist for his supposed ignorance, we have some reason to thank him for adhering to the traditional style of composition, and to admire the dexterity with which he has turned the stumbling-block into a stepping-stone to success. He has used the white cloth to

give value to the bright colours and richly-varied details above; and he has availed himself of the opportunity which the stiff and monotonous composition has presented for gratifying our curiosity. We naturally wish, in such a scene as that depicted here, to see and judge for ourselves; and the apostles being all placed in a line on one side of the table, we are able to exercise our physiognomical faculty, and try to detect the traitor.

Justly to appreciate a picture, we must remember the position it was intended to occupy, and the purpose it was designed to answer. Looking at the picture as the chief decoration of the large and lofty dining-hall of a rich convent, we admit at once the suitability of the subject, and admire the method of its treatment. The prior and superiors sat opposite to it at a long, raised table, as in our college halls, at the upper end of the room, and the monks sat down on the right and left of the chamber, all of them on the side of the table nearest the wall, no seats being placed on the outer side, for the greater convenience of serving. The company, at meal-times, would thus find the picture complete their circle, and our Lord would appear to be presiding over them all. The figures in the picture being colossal would be reduced by distance to the size of the persons seated below, and the harmony of the fourth table with the other three would be preserved by its arrangement; the table-cloth, with the corners tied up, and with its regular folds as if fresh from the press, and the dishes and drinking cups matching those in use by the holy fathers. Our Lord would be thus evidently set forth eating and drinking with them, and day by day they would be warned of the temptation that beset them of becoming the successors of the apostate apostle. What our Lord had said to His disciples He would seem to be saying to them, "Verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me."

While Da Vinci conformed to the tradition of the elders in his composition of "The Last Supper," he was one of the first to dissent from their conventional treatment of the human figure. The long table was indispensable, and the guests had to be *seated*, and

that in a row upon one side, but no necessity was laid upon him to repeat the flat and feeble forms of his predecessors. His genius had taught him not only that the anatomy of the body need not be sacrificed to the expression of the mind, but that spirituality in art could only be fully developed in the degree in which a painter was natural. By the study and imitation of nature he was able to introduce into painting the modelling and chiaro-oscuro of nature, and retaining the sentiment of the mediæval artists, to take the first timid steps in that enlargement of style which led ultimately to the grand development of art by Michael Angelo and Raphael. It is not only this combination of what had been hitherto regarded as incompatible that strikes the spectator who has any knowledge of the progress of painting, but it is also the genius that is shewn in the subordination of the minutest detail to the one great aim of the picture.

Those who visited the Art-Treasures Exhibition at Manchester (so valuable for its chronological arrangement of the pictures) will remember that the artists of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were satisfied with a light and shade of the most timid description, and that Giotto, and afterwards Masaccio, were the first to venture upon introducing a greater breadth and quantity of shadow. It was left for Leonardo to treat light and shade as an art, and looking at the ease and ingenuity with which he has introduced his lights and darks, both in quantity and shape, we can understand how its chiaro-oscuro has made "The Last Supper" a great picture, and established the claim of Da Vinci to be a great master.

The picture is, however, something more than a work of art. The same scriptural effect which is produced by the Cartoons of Raphael is felt by us as we look at the Cenacolo, and it is this which has made these religious pictures so popular with those who read the Bible with any intelligence, and who receive it with any faith. "The Last Supper" is even more popular than the Cartoons, and this is perhaps to be accounted for by the greater popularity of its subject, the betrayal of our Lord being one of the most widely-known incidents of His life, and all of us having a more or less de-

fined faith and hope in His death. The picture thus finds at once common ground with almost every spectator. It suggests a well-known scene, and stirs up the mind by way of remembrance. It tells us nothing new, but it gains and keeps its power over us by its harmony with the Scripture narrative, and its evident desire to do us good.

It is utterly impossible to make any mistake about the time of the picture, or to lose sight of the principal figure. Our Lord is detached from the disciples, and is placed in the centre, with His head on the same level as the horizon, so that the eye, naturally taking the point of sight, is mechanically fixed upon His face. The open window with its attracting light, and the seven lines in the ceiling and the seven lines on the floor, verging towards the same point, not only give depth and air to the picture, but they assist the painter till he can keep us spell-bound, by shewing us not only how our Lord looked in the night in which He was betrayed, but depicting that kind of expression which we feel must have passed over His countenance, when He announced at the last supper to His disciples that one of them would be the traitor.

The face, which seems, even in an engraving, to be illumined with a ray of divinity, is one of the very few likenesses of our Lord that almost satisfy us. We can easily understand how Leonardo allowed years to pass away without daring to paint in that portrait. The story of his leaving the heads of the Christ and Judas unfinished, feeling it to be impossible to represent the devilishness of the one or the divinity of the other, is well known and abundantly confirmed. The disciples look, however, as if they had been painted in after the figure of our Lord, and this effect must have been produced by Leonardo working upon them, feeling as he did so that the empty space was, for the time, occupied with the invisible presence of his ideal portrait. We are glad that, though despairing of success, he did not follow the suggestion of his friend Bernardo Zenale, who, believing that he could not surpass what he had already done, advised him to leave the head of the Christ unfinished, urging the example of the Grecian artist.

Because of the difficulty that has attended the efforts to paint the face of our Saviour, some have been almost inclined to doubt its propriety, forgetting that the reasons that may be alleged against any material representation of the Father, cannot be advanced against the likeness of His Son. Since God pleased to manifest Himself in flesh, there was nothing to prevent those for whom He thus humbled Himself procuring His portrait. Written traditions, from the earliest centuries of our era, containing real or apocryphal tales, assure us of the existence of impressions imprinted on veils, portraits attributed to Nicodemus, Pilate, or Luke, and actually a statue.

"Abgarus, king of Edessa, having learnt," says Damascenus, "the wonderful things related of our Saviour, became inflamed with Divine love. He sent ambassadors to the Son of God, inviting Him to come and visit him, and should the Saviour refuse to grant his request, he charged his ambassadors to employ some artist to make a portrait of our Lord. Jesus, from whom nothing is hidden, and to whom nothing is impossible, being aware of the intention of Abgarus, took a piece of linen, applied it to His face, and depicted thereon His own image. This very portrait," continues Damascenus, "is in existence at the present day, and in perfect preservation."

At the same epoch, a minute verbal description of the appearance of Christ was in circulation. The following description, which is of great importance, was sent to the Roman Senate by Publius Lentulus, proconsul of Judæa before Herod. Lentulus had seen the Saviour, and had made Him sit to him, as it were, that he might give a written description of His features and physiognomy. His portrait, apocryphal though it be, is at least one of the first upon record; it dates from the earliest period of the Church, and has been mentioned by the most ancient fathers. Lentulus writes to the senate as follows:—"At this time appeared a man who is still living and endowed with mighty power; His name is Jesus Christ. His disciples call Him the Son of God; others regard

Him as a powerful prophet. He raises the dead to life, and heals the sick of every description of infirmity and disease. This man is of lofty stature, and well-proportioned; His countenance severe and virtuous, so that He inspires beholders with feelings both of fear and love. The hair of His head is of the colour of wine, and from the top of the head to the ears straight and without radiance; but it descends from the ears to the shoulders in shining curls. From the shoulders the hair flows down the back, divided into two portions, after the manner of the Nazarenes; His forehead is clear and without wrinkle; His face free from blemish, and slightly tinged with red; His physiognomy noble and gracious. The nose and mouth faultless. His beard is abundant, the same colour as the hair, and forked. His eyes blue, and very brilliant. In reproving or censuring, He is awe-inspiring; in exhorting and teaching, His speech is gentle and caressing. His countenance is marvellous in seriousness and grace. He has never once been seen to laugh; but many have seen Him weep. He is slender in person, His hands are straight and long, His arms beautiful. Grave and solemn in His discourse, His language is simple and quiet. He is in appearance the most beautiful of the children of men."

The Emperor Constantine caused pictures of the Son of God to be painted from this ancient description.

The delay in finishing the picture is said to have affected the prior of the Dominicans more than the difficulty in painting the portrait, and to have led to his making some complaint to the duke. In an interview with Lodovico, (occasioned by this interference,) Leonardo is reported to have said, "There remain only two heads unfinished in the whole picture. That of Christ I have long despaired of ever being able to complete, as I am quite convinced of the utter impossibility of representing the union of divinity with humanity, and much less can I hope to supply the deficiency from my own imagination." It must have been at this interview that the humorous threat was made to the officious dignitary, which led to the idle tale of the Judas being a portrait of the prior. The head is

known to be no likeness, besides, the dignity of Leonardo is a sufficient guarantee against his making his picture a vehicle for satire. Leonardo, as proved from his "Characaturas," was full of humour, and never, perhaps, was he more ready to shew it than at such a time as this, when he was absorbed in the most serious matters. The *jeu d'esprit* seems to have been literally interpreted by some dull story-teller, and to have thus found a currency.

The two heads which occasioned Leonardo the most anxiety happen to be those which are the best preserved. The traitor has outlived the other apostles, and he is yet to be seen, in the original, turning towards our Lord, and assuming the attitude of innocence. The expression of the respective characters of the other apostles, with the exception of St John and St Simon, may yet be faintly traced.

The faces of the apostles disappoint many. Most come to the picture thinking that they shall be able at once to detect the traitor, and expecting to recognise in the other apostles the fancy portraits which they have painted for themselves. They forget that the disciples were men of like feelings and passions with themselves, and that when our Lord told them that one of them would betray Him, "They began to inquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing."

The ordinary conception of the characters of the eleven are as traditionally false as the vulgar notion that is formed of the traitor and his treachery. Expecting the countenances to conform to these fictitious characters, spectators are happily, in looking at "The Last Supper," doomed to be disappointed. The eleven are not represented as saints, nor is Judas painted as a devil.

The Gospels contain not only a portrait of our Lord, but they depict very plainly the likenesses of those whom He chose to be with Him. We have only to collate the passages which refer to their conduct upon various occasions when "the spirit they were of" was manifested—we have only to recollect that on this very night there was a strife among them who should be the greatest,

and we shall perceive that the physiognomy of Leonardo is founded on facts. The apostles, at this time, were only men of this world. They had not yet received power, the Holy Spirit was not yet come upon them. Their faith and hope in our Saviour was alloyed with a vain expectation that His kingdom was to be of this world.

There was, indeed, a difference between the eleven and the traitor, but there was also a likeness. Judas truly was a thief, but it was, assuredly, not his love of money which led him to commit his unpardonable sin. Had he been governed by merely mercenary motives, he would never have jeopardised his gains as keeper of the bag, for thirty pieces of silver. Judas had the same conjectures and expectations as James and John and the rest of the apostles, but while sharing with them in their delusions, he had made shipwreck of a good conscience, and was thus prepared to adopt any crooked policy that might appear to him to be likely to hasten the attainment of his worldly ambition. The other apostles were lacking in faith, but not in fidelity.

Leonardo seems to have formed as just a conception of the disciple who betrayed our Lord as he did of the others who forsook Him and fled. He has preserved an individuality in each face, while giving to them the same look that is common to all men. He has pointed out the traitor, to those who have only eyes, by the bag and the over-turned salt, and to those who have mind as well as eyes, by placing his face in shadow, and by giving him the air of the worldly professor. The profile, turned from the light, (the only one in this position,) reminds us of the words of the Saviour, "Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved." His evil eye suggests the lines of Shakspeare—

> "Which is the villain? let me see his eyes,
> That when I note another man like him
> I may avoid him."

The various apostles are identified by their places in the picture being recorded in a MS. in the Dominican Convent at Milan, sup-

posed to have been Leonardo's own explanation. Beginning with the disciple who is standing up at the end of the table, bearing the whole weight of his body on his right foot, and playing unconsciously with the toes on his left foot, we have, in the first group, Bartholomew, James the Less, and Andrew. Two of these are silent, bending over in suspense to listen; the other has just uttered some exclamation of surprise. The second group contains the traitor, who has seated himself between the two most notable disciples. Peter, with the same hand which smote off the ear of the high priest's servant, is grasping a knife, which he has taken off the table in the moment of his indignation; he is stooping over and whispering to John to ask our Lord for the traitor's name. John, with his arms fallen, as if he were half fainting, leans towards Peter, and seems hardly to have strength left even to listen. Sitting on the other side is James the Elder, who appeals to our Lord, throwing back his arms, as if he wished that his very heart might be searched. Thomas, whose distrust and habitual querulousness have wretchedly disfigured his countenance, is pressing up behind James, and putting the common question, "Lord, is it I?" while Philip is silently pointing with both hands to his breast, "exceeding sorrowful," and pleading his innocence. The last group, containing Matthew, Jude, and Simon, are speaking to each other, clearing themselves by pointing to the One who knew what was in them.

It it hard to persuade ourselves that we are deceived, and that we do not hear the voices of the disciples. Shaking off the spell, we wonder how it has been produced, and we imagine that Da Vinci must have adopted a plan which he strongly recommended to his disciples in his Treatise on Painting. He there advises his pupils to assist their imaginations in suiting the attitudes to their figures, bv considering attentively the gestures of mutes, who express the thoughts and emotions of their minds by the motions of their eyes, hands, and whole body. We have here also some of the results of those painstaking studies in physiognomy which the artist was ever

making. He evidently possessed the power of expressing a definite idea by his painted lines. The action of his figures seems to speak even more plainly than their words.

There is a speech and language, though its voice is equally inaudible, which is re-echoed by this picture, and which must be heard by all those who have ears to hear. What our Lord said to His disciples, in the night in which He was betrayed, He here seems to be saying to us. The picture, as it hangs in our houses, is a warning to us of our danger of sinning in the midst of privileges. While the Word is for all, it is especially addressed (as the painting in the convent at Milan) to those who minister in holy things, and who are familiar with the sanctities of the Church. Our Lord can be betrayed as well as crucified again, and none have the same temptations or the same opportunity to be traitors as those who eat and drink at His table. As we look at the face of Judas, the likeness of which is to be seen too often, we are filled with fear and trembling, and knowing that, at best, we are yet carnal, and walk as men, we, though we are not hiding any iniquity in our heart, feel afresh the deceitfulness and danger of worldliness, and, turning to our Lord repeat the question, "Lord, is it I?"

We will not detain our readers, or we might draw their attention to the art shewn in the contrast between the quietness in the face and hands of the Saviour and the excitement which is moving around Him. It is only, too, by study that we awake to other instances in which Leonardo has concealed his art. The difficulties arising from the fixed number of the figures, and their conventional position, are lost sight of as we look at the easy and endless variety of the composition. The same attitude is not repeated. No head is placed straightly upon the shoulders. The temper, action, size, and complexion of each disciple are different. There are no two hands alike, and no head is turned on the same side as the breast.

Those who wish to know more of "The Last Supper" will do well to consult a work which contains much interesting informa-

tion. It was published by Signor Bozzi, of Milan, and entitled, "Discorso del Cenacolo di Da Vinci." Bozzi is the same artist who executed the copy from which the mosaic work at Vienna was designed.

EXPOSITIONS OF GREAT PICTURES.

No. V.

Christ Presented by Pilate to the People.

"Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early: and they themselves went not into the judgment-hall, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the passover. Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring you against this man? They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee. Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death: that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die. Then Pilate entered into the judgment-hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews? Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all. But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews? Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber."—JOHN xviii. 28-40.

"Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe, and said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands. Pilate therefore went forth again, and said unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!"—JOHN xix. 1-5.

CHRIST PRESENTED BY PILATE TO THE PEOPLE.

"Hark, how they cry aloud still, 'Crucify,'
* * * *
Pilate a stranger holdeth off; but they
Mine own dear people cry, 'Away, away.'
With noises confused frighting the day:
Was ever grief like mine?

"Yet still they shout, and cry, and stop their ears,
Putting my life among their sins and fears,
And therefore with my blood on them and theirs.
Was ever grief like mine?"

George Herbert.

HIS "Ecce Homo" is one of the earlier works of Correggio, and it is painted on a panel three feet two and a half inches in height, and two feet seven inches in width. It hangs beside the "Lazarus" of Sebastian in the National Gallery, and though less than a twelfth of the size of that large dark canvas, it is felt by the merest tyro to be the greater picture. There could hardly be a stronger contrast. The difference in the chiaro-oscuro of the two pictures, notwithstanding they were painted within a few years of each other, is as striking as the difference in their composition. Correggio has filled his colours and shadows with light, and he was prudent enough to limit himself in the number of accessory figures. He has admitted just so many persons as were sufficient to tell his version of the story, and no one else. Many more of the Jews were present at the trial of our Lord than at the resurrection of Lazarus, but Correggio has resolutely excluded them all. He has left them, where they placed themselves, standing without the prætorium. Instead, therefore, of our Lord being lost in a crowd, we can all see Him at once, and as

we look at Him we can hear behind us the full assembly of the Sanhedrim, and the roaring rabble, clamouring for His blood. We shall find that we must listen as well as look, or we shall not understand this picture.

The name "Ecce Homo" was given to portraits of our Lord where He is represented when crowned with thorns, and they are to be met with almost as frequently as the Madonnas. As a rule they were painted without any accessories, so that the employment of the name in this instance is hardly legitimate, for while Correggio does indeed set forth our Lord as He appeared in this stage of His baptism of suffering, he clearly intended to produce an historical design. In treating his "Ecce Homo" historically, he may have wished to avail himself of the assistance given to the face of our Lord by dramatic interest, and we know from his groups of heads in the Gallery that he was fully aware of the value lent to a countenance by the harmonies of similar and contrasted expression. At any rate, you can see that he has kept his eye single, and not lost sight of the end in the means, for he throws his chief light on his chief figure, and concentrates and gradates and contrasts the sentiment of the picture, as skilfully as its colour and chiaro-oscuro. Being under authority, and a good Catholic, he has of course introduced the Virgin; but as a good artist, he has utilized her face and figure, for the lines and the light and the tints that he needed. Even the architecture, trifling as it appears to be, renders him important service: the few inches of balustrade hinting at the presence of the populace, and the portion of the pillar behind our Lord suggesting the unmovableness alike of His love and of the kingdom that He came to establish.

Until the time of Correggio, oil-painting had held a subordinate position. The clearness and transparency of fresco rendered it specially suited to the interiors of dimly-lighted churches and public buildings. Instead of absorbing light like oil, it may be said to emit it, and thus strongly recommended itself to the Italians for the decoration of their unbroken walls and uncarved ceilings. Working freely, the painter could throw his whole mind at once into his pic-

ture, and with great ease and rapidity produce effects which otherwise were unattainable, or only the results of lengthened labour. The three great masters, Michael Angelo, Leonardo, and Raphael, therefore chose it as their favourite vehicle, Michael Angelo saying that oil-painting was only fit for women and children.

Whatever may be the merits of fresco, for works on a large scale, which are exhibited where there are not many windows, oil-painting, since the days of Correggio has been proved to be far superior to all other methods, in the power of combining force and substance with transparency.

But little opportunity for invention or discovery had been left to those who came after the great masters of form and composition. Da Vinci had made great advances also in chiaroscuro. Correggio, however, established his claim to hold the next position, by originating that peculiar play of light and shade which is now inseparably associated with his name, and to which so many of his imitators have been indebted for the poetry of their pictures. He was the first to shew the capacity of oil for representing texture, and for rendering shadows transparent. His paint is a rich substance with the lustrous depth of precious tones. He was the first who collected a large mass of light in the centre, and melted one light into another, and lost shadows in darkness. Few artists have so good a claim to originality, and none have been more flattered and followed. The head of this Christ, for instance, is repeated again and again by the Caracci, and it was pronounced by Haydon to be "the only head of Christ in the world." The grace and fleshiness of his forms, the flow of his draperies, the harmony and tenderness of his colouring, and the balance and finish of his pictures have often inspired the profession, and it is these rare beauties which have given rise to the well-known cant about "the Correggiosity of Correggio."

The idea of this "Ecce Homo" is in peculiar keeping with the pathos and purity of this master, and the perfection of his taste. This picture is, however, too small to give any just conception either of his excellencies or defects, and, besides being one of his

earlier works, it has had the misfortune to be retouched in many places. Correggio lacks the force, grandeur, and passion of Raphael, and painting so much as he did on cupolas of cathedrals, he cultivated the faculty of foreshortening till it became almost a frenzy.

Comparing this Ecce Homo with others, you are struck with the entire absence of either sentimentalism or perfunctoriness. Belonging, as the subject does, to the set of stock topics chosen by the church for painters and preachers, it is found to be treated sometimes with professional routine, and sometimes with theatrical grimace. Many Ecce Homos are most unfortunate and mischievous mistakes. The Christ is painted as if He were appealing to you for your pity, the artist having forgotten that He did not present Himself to the people. These pictures remind you of the sermons you sometimes hear, where the preacher has wholly missed the meaning of his text, and you begin to think that half the originality of the great masters and the great preachers is to be attributed to their knowledge and love of the truth. They are new to you because they are true. Correggio has kept to the letter of the record, and has thus preserved the character of our Lord as a man. Is it that he determined to tell the whole story, because he wished to enter his protest against this common and degrading error?

Our Lord here has evidently been brought out by Pilate and exposed to the gaze of the people. His face is in harmony with the fact. The expression is so treated that you can see (if, indeed, you can bear to look at it) that there is not the slightest self-consciousness about it. Instead of any traces of that human weakness that leads sufferers to parade their sorrows, there are rather the indications of a higher nature. These are not to be discerned at once, for the body is well-nigh worn out with the life of sorrow. It was shattered by the agony in the garden, and since then it has been scourged. The divinity of our Lord will, however, grow upon you, as you look into the eyes; and you may do this, for they do not

meet your own. You see for yourself that though He has been tried and tempted in all points, a whole life long, like as we are, He has never murmured. The signs of grief are not to be confounded with the marks of sin. The face is disfigured, but He is evidently in pain from the pressure of the thorns and the binding of the wrists. The lips are a little livid, but that is to be expected, for in the agony of prayer He sweat, last night, drops of blood. You see that this suffering face is not thinking of itself, nor does it betray the least hesitation in its purpose of mercy. The indignities which our Lord has endured have not degraded Him, nor has the raging fury of His enemies, as they cry for His crucifixion, quenched His love. The eyes are fuller of anguish than the face is of pain, and as they look far away over you, they tell you where the heart is. He is ready to weep, not for Himself, but for His enemies. The resistless, helpless form suggests how utterly He has abandoned Himself for their sakes. Whilst they are yet His enemies, He is ready to die for them. Correggio has painted the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, and by painting His love he has painted His divinity.

The mystery is evidently perplexing the Roman soldier, who cannot believe what he sees. He may be the centurion, who afterwards made so good a profession before so many witnesses. He would have known of the dream of Pilate's wife, and he must have heard before to-day of this Jesus of Nazareth; but he is now seeing for himself, and what he will hear and see before the day is over, will issue in his conversion, faith, and love. We have here, perhaps, the first germ of his conviction, that "truly this is the Son of God."

The colour and the chiaroscuro increase the pathos of the picture, and, in their way, take up its tale. Correggio has thrown his highest light upon the breast of our Lord, as if he would have us read His very heart. It reveals the same love which is seen in His face by the light that lingers there, and which is further disclosed by that which falls on the folded arms and fettered hands. The breadth of middle tint on the pillar, blending it with the Saviour's face and

figure, continues the story and deepens the impression. The colouring, with all its hues exquisitely broken, is adapted to the sentiment. The carnations are the leading tones. The flesh is rather fair, but of a manly complexion. It is flesh, not wax, for you can see the blood under the skin. The crimson of the robe is reduced as much as possible. The linen about the waist is a coarse white, and while setting off the surrounding colours, it serves to display the fingers of the Christ. The blue cloak of the Virgin, of a deep tone, adds to the solemnity of the scene, and while harmonising with the bluish-gray of the balustrade, it produces, by contrast to the hands, the strongest effect of relief, and gives roundness and unity to the whole.

The light, as it travels, touches the hands and face of the Virgin, and reminds us of her presence. It certainly needs no apology. As Protestants, we cannot, of course, be expected to share the feelings of those for whom this picture was painted, but it is due to Correggio that we attempt to understand them. In his day, the worship of the Madonna was an almost passionate idolatry, and her life was systematically interwoven by the Romish Church with that of our Lord. She was supposed to be inseparably connected with Him, and theologians insisted upon her introduction into sacred pictures. Those subjects were avoided where her presence was palpably impossible, and those scenes chosen where she might be brought before the people, with at any rate the same frequency and importance as her son. This accounts for her being here, and for her prominent position. She is in the foreground, for she is to divide the attention of the spectator with the Saviour, and every one who looks at the picture cannot help seeing her, for she faints. Hooded to the eyes, as usual, in blue, the colour of the cloak enhances the pallor of her face, besides acting as a foil to the mass of flesh tint in the middle of the picture. The eyelids are dropping as in death. The hands, like all the other hands, correspond with the face. They are closing with the eyes. She has been clutching at the balustrade, but, falling back in a swoon, she has been obliged

to relax her hold. They are almost helpless, just as her face is almost unconscious. Her weakness betrays her nature. She is but a woman after all. The contrast becomes something more than pictorial. There is a strong resemblance between the features of the Virgin and those of our Lord, but it is in form and not in expression. The likeness is more bodily than spiritual. At any rate, as represented here, she resembles Him rather in countenance than in character.*

Pilate is standing just within the judgment hall, and he is connected with the scene by the breadth of middle tint on the pillar, by his hand which is pointing to the Christ, and by his eyes which are looking at the Sanhedrim as he speaks to them. The hand is an index to the time. It is not yet withdrawn, for his words (which give the name to the picture) are only just uttered. There is a shapelessness about his form and an awkwardness about his attitude, which seem to betray that he is not at his ease. From the very outset he has been embarrassed and uncomfortable, and all throughout the trial he has endeavoured to evade the decision. He is now quite as much annoyed with himself as with the chief priests. He is afraid, for he cannot understand himself,—his hesitation and unprecedented scruples; a little while since he had mingled the blood of other Galileans with their sacrifices without any compunction, and now he finds that he is anxious to save this Galilean from the thirsty Jews. Wearied out at last, with their resistance and his own relentings—irritated at the course events were taking—he has wrapped his robe around him, as if he would, if he could, hide his vexation. His robe of office and jewelled turban can do nothing for him. He forms another contrast in the picture to the self-possession and dignity of our Lord. The Virgin, in a faint, falls back

* This oversight has been noticed by Catholic writers. Thus, Molanus observes that "the blessed Virgin should not be painted in a swoon, as if an ordinary mother, for, as the holy fathers say, she retained her consistency and hope to the end, even when all others failed; therefore, only by paleness and tears is her sorrow to be manifested." Petrus Canasus says, "Painters who represent her fainting are inexcusable."

upon an arm of flesh, and Correggio has so managed the figure of Pilate, even to the fold and colour of his dress, that you can see what manner of man he was. The well-known words become the more distinct, and the naked, bleeding form, crowned with thorns, with the garb of mockery slipping off its shoulders, becomes all the more conspicuous. The dress of the governor is a rather light yellow with stripes of pale pinkish-purple, his beard is light, and the uncertain hues of the head-covering serve for the repetition and degradation of the blue and red robes of the principal figures.

Connoisseurs are divided in their opinion as to whether it is the Magdalene, or the beloved disciple who is supporting the Virgin; it is possible that some restorer is to blame for giving the occasion for such a question.

This picture, formerly in the possession of the Counts Prati of Parma, was subsequently long in the Colonna Palace at Rome, and it was reckoned the best work of Correggio in that city. It was purchased in the early part of the French Revolution by Sir Simon Clarke, who, not succeeding in removing it from Italy, was induced to part from it to Murat, then king of Naples. In 1834 it became the property of the Marquis of Londonderry, and was for fourteen years one of the most admired ornaments in the collection at Holderness House. It was bought for the public, together with "The Academy of Cupid," at the price of £11,500.

Last year a picture, purporting to be the replica of this Ecce Homo, was on view in London, and excited considerable attention. It was found at Rome, painted over, and it had evidently been thus concealed for more than a century. The greatest gems have been discovered under the same disguise. The replica of the Dresden Magdalene had been painted over to look like a dog lying down in a landscape, and was purchased at Rome by Lord Dudley for a very large sum. This disguise was adopted to prevent valuable pictures from being taken as plunder in times of disturbance. The old masters often produced two works on the same subject, almost

identical in design, as, for instance, we saw in our last paper, was the case with the "Madonna della Seggiola." The history of Correggio's pictures is so singularly imperfect, that the historical test fails altogether. Whether the above-mentioned work be entitled to the distinction claimed for it, is a point which we believe is yet unsettled.

EXPOSITIONS OF GREAT PICTURES.

No. VI.

The Descent from the Cross.

"The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath-day, (for that Sabbath-day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced. And after this, Joseph of Arimathea (being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews) besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. And there came also Nicodemus, (which at the first came to Jesus by night,) and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury."—JOHN xix. 31–40.

THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS.

"He was taken from prison and from judgment :
And who shall declare his generation?
For he was cut off out of the land of the living :
For the transgressions of my people was he stricken.
And he made his grave with the wicked,
And with the rich in his death ;
Because he had done no violence,
Neither was any deceit in his mouth :
Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him :
He hath put him to grief."

THE PROPHECIES OF ISAIAH.

HIS picture is not so great as it is popular, and it owes its popularity to its colour and its daring execution. Compared with the hunting and bacchanalian scenes, and the battle-pieces of this dashing master, and even with his other religious subjects, it is less gross in its forms, less florid in its hues, and less violent in its contrasts; but it betrays too many of the tricks of composition and picture-making, to be acceptable to those who reserve their feeling, when they discover that they are addressed by one who has not forgotten himself in his subject.

To be popular, you need not, perhaps you cannot, be true. A popular picture must have a popular subject, and it must be treated in a popular way. Colour is more attractive to the masses than either form or expression. Action speaks to them more loudly than words. Rubens was equally a master of action and colour, and he was more anxious about his manner than his matter. He knew the popular power of appeals to the eye; and, addressing himself to the senses, he readily became the painter of the people.

This "Descent from the Cross" forms the centre of a large

triptych, or double-winged altar-piece, in the chapel of the Guild of Arquebusiers, in the south transept of the Cathedral at Antwerp. Its history is well known. In pulling down and rebuilding his house, Rubens had encroached upon the ground of the Corporation, and as an indemnity, he agreed to paint a picture of their patron, St Christopher. The church furnished him with one of their stock subjects, and the etymology of the name of the saint suggested the adoption of a conceit which at first sadly puzzled and disappointed the gunsmiths, and which seems to need, like other quaint fancies of the time, some explanation.

The triptych contains five pictures, and in all of them there is a reference to the legend which has given the name to the saint. On each of the three inner panels, scriptural scenes are chosen where Christ is represented as being *carried*. The idea is certainly subtle, and we can readily forgive the civic guard for their obtuseness in not perceiving the allusion to St Christopher. At first sight there does not appear to be the remotest connexion between "The Saint" and "The Visit of Mary to Elizabeth," "The Presentation in the Temple," and "The Taking Down from the Cross."

The riddle was solved when the triptych was closed. On the reverse side of the wings (which act as shutters, closing over the middle panel) the Canaanitish giant is seen, wading through the water with his huge club, and carrying upon his shoulders the wondrous child, whose importunity had roused him from his rest. The saint is being lighted on his way, as he fords the river, by a hermit who holds a lantern. There is nothing much to notice in these minor pictures, except the brawny limbs of the giant, the earnest greeting of Mary and Elizabeth, and the tired appearance of the ass.

Some allowance must be made for the quaintness of the age, or the pun may prejudice us against the picture. It is, however, almost as difficult to appreciate the quibble as it is to accept the legend. The play upon the word seems to indicate a spirit of trifling, that can hardly be reconciled with the elevation of mind which is indispensable to a painter of sacred subjects. It serves to

strengthen a disagreeable suspicion of affectation, which grows upon you as you look at this work.

We are not, however, to judge the past by the present, nor to argue from ourselves to others. This triptych was the production of a Flemish painter, and it was designed for a Flemish church. The pictures have the faults of their school, and Rubens, while far behind Guido, Veronese, and Raphael, in scriptural feeling, was far before Rembrandt, Vandyke, and Jordaens. We may also remember that our Quarles, Wither, and Herbert, were his cotemporaries, and that much of their poetry and piety were marred, in the same way, by the mannerism of the time. There are those, even in this day, who are not only able to tolerate, but actually to relish this treatment of religious truths. The acceptableness of the small wit of popular preachers is a case in point.

"The Taking Down from the Cross" was one of the first pictures painted by Rubens after his return from Italy; and although evidently betraying, in its general effect, a resemblance to Italian art, it displays none of its power. It is indeed, as we shall see, an adaptation of the design of Volterra; but while Rubens borrowed the idea, he could not catch the style. His copies of the *chef d'œuvres* of Da Vinci, and his other studies in Italy, were unable to inspire him with any feeling for grace, refinement, or ideal beauty; and it would seem as if it had been impossible for him to overcome his realistic tendencies, and the coarseness and vulgarity of his native school.

Rubens knew wherein his great strength lay. For a time, he may have tried to address himself to the mind and heart of a spectator, but he soon relinquished the effort. His forte was in colour and chiaroscuro, and not in form and expression. Adopting the watchword of the great master of ancient oratory, he gave himself wholly up to "action;" and he often pushes the dramatic power of his pictures to the verge of the theatrical.

Never having any very serious aim, (living too much in the world, and being too much of it, to be in unison with the spirit of

sacred art,) he chose those scenes which inspired him because they admitted a picturesque treatment; and without any scruple of harmonising the composition and colour of a picture with its sentiment, he abandoned himself to that placid and dashing style to which he owes so much of his popularity. In an autograph letter, preserved at Cologne, he gives, for instance, as his reason for selecting "The Crucifixion of Peter" as an altar-piece for the church in which he was christened, that the circumstance of the head being downward made a novel and fine incident for a picture. The pictorial situation of the cross, forming a diagonal line, in his "Elevation" in the other transept of the cathedral,—the opportunity afforded for the display of energy in the muscular men, who appear to be very unnecessarily exerting their utmost strength,—the swaying of the body of the Christ,—seem to explain his choice of that subject. Conscious, also, of his power of painting horses, he has introduced them, and has thus added greatly to the picturesque effect of the composition. One can easily understand, if these things were so, how his great works would be deficient in historical dignity, and how his representations of Holy Writ would be sadly wanting in holy feeling.

While candidly confessing that our heart has not been stirred by his Scripture scenes, it would be folly to attempt to ignore the genius of Rubens. All who saw the splendid collection of his pictures, in the collection of Art Treasures at Manchester in 1857, will remember his power. Notwithstanding their detection of his trickery, and their disgust at his coarseness, they must have been forced, by the exuberance of his invention, the breadth, brightness, and depth of his colour, and the extraordinary mastery of his materials, to acknowledge how well he held his own in that memorable contest of schools and masters.

Tastes differ, and are not to be disputed. We are being constantly reminded, that about pictures, as well as about other things, we are no judges for others. We have heard of those, for example, who never looked at this "Descent from the Cross" without tears.

We read, in the "Sunny Memories of Foreign Lands," that Mrs Stowe was in ecstacies when she saw it. She closes her rhapsody with the declaration, "Art has satisfied me at last." This somewhat startling admission may be accounted for by her circumstances. "I confess," she writes, "I went to see the painting without much enthusiasm. My experience with Correggio's 'Notte,' and some of the celebrities of Dresden, was not encouraging. I was weary, too, with sight-seeing. I expected to find an old, dim picture, half-spoiled with cleaning, which I should be required to look into shape by an exercise of my jaded imagination. After coming down from hearing the chimes, we went into a side-room, and sat down before the painting. My first sensation was of astonishment, blank, absolute, overwhelming. After all I had seen, I had no idea of a painting like this. I was lifted off my feet, as much as by Cologne Cathedral or Niagara Falls, so that I could neither reason nor think whether I was pleased or not."

The portrait of Sir Peter Paul Rubens prepares you for his pictures. He looks what he was—the accomplished, well-bred, and successful man of the world.* Tall, handsome, courtly, well-dressed and well-preserved, you can easily understand how his career would be very different to the ordinary lives of painters. You feel that you would have only yourself to blame for your disappointment, if you expected to meet with any traces of unworldliness in his works.

Reading the history of his busy life, you wonder how he could find the time to produce the thousands of compositions which are attributed to him. There is hardly a gallery in England that has not "a Rubens." The cities, towns, churches, and private cabinets of the continent are full of his pictures. Many of them, indeed, look as if they had not cost him any lengthened labour, the

* In our State Paper Office his letters are preserved, and have recently been edited by Mr Sainsbury, who says of them, that they possess "a high and noble tone, dignity, firmness, and cautiousness, exquisitely united to the most polite courtesy, elegant composition, and elevated sentiment, and at once shew the education of the gentleman, and the mind of the man."

grounds shewing that they have evidently been struck off at once with the brush, his fire, rapidity, and self-confidence not permitting him to pause over the more precise and studious details of his art. There are, of course, exceptions to this rule. "The Fall of the Lost," for instance, in the Munich Gallery, is a carefully studied work, being finished with the greatest care and delicacy.

Rubens is acknowledged to have been the most fertile of all painters, whether ancient or modern; and although you learn that he was an early riser, careful in his living, and kept the Sabbath, yet you hesitate to accept the fabulous number of his pictures, till you find that many of those which bear his name, were the work of his scholars who were employed in enlarging his small coloured sketches. The best of their original works (if, indeed, they are worthy of the name) are now often, and not improperly, attributed to him.

Among the courts visited by Rubens was that of our Charles I.; and we are indebted to this master for our possession of the Cartoons of Raphael, and for inoculating our country with the love of the fine arts. He received £3000 for his paintings at Whitehall, and they are characterised by that false allegorical taste for which the artist has been so often reproached. In the "Apotheosis of James I.," the Virtues are represented by members of Parliament; and Prudence, under the form of Apollo, holds in her hand the horn of plenty. It was during his visit to this country that he made his celebrated repartee, when surprised at his easel. "I see," said a noble lord, "that the ambassador of His Catholic Majesty amuses himself by painting, sometimes." "I amuse myself," returned Rubens, "sometimes, by playing the ambassador."

In 1847, seven years after the bi-centenary of Rubens's death had been kept with great *éclat*, and a colossal statue in bronze had been erected to his memory in the centre of the Plase Verte, the condition of his pictures in the cathedral at Antwerp became the subject of serious consideration. The panels had shrunk, and the paint had broken into scales. It was suggested that they should be

transferred from their panels to canvas; but a pause was made before trying this perilous experiment; and at last it was determined only to clean and restore them. The old varnish and the re-painting which "The Descent from the Cross" had received in Paris, have been removed; and the picture is considered to have gained much by these losses.

One key to the popular impression produced by this picture is to be found in its unity. Every figure has closed around the dead Christ in a dense mass, and you have the strong effect of a single group. Carrying out the reference to St Christopher, each person is touching either the body, or the sheet by which the body is being lowered. Some are touching both. One holds the sheet with his teeth in order that his hands may be free to assist in the descent. All are thus gathered about a common centre, and are brought into the closest contact. The master of action has chosen the moment which is the moment of action. The action is consentaneous and concentrated. The attention of every actor is absorbed, for the moment is critical, requiring the exercise of the greatest care, and the exertion of the greatest strength. The time demands a harmony. All must act together. The women have risen, instinctively, to render their assistance, and they, too, are touching, though you see that they are not supporting, the body.

Contrasts are popular. The contrasts here are strong and striking. Utter helplessness is brought into immediate contact with the utmost strength. The body in the centre is pale with death, and the whole of the surrounding group are more or less flushed and heated with animated action. Men are revealed to be in the hand of God,—God seems to be here represented as in the hands of men.

The subject itself is popular. It is a murder. The chief figure is a corpse. Its drooping head, its naked indignity, its gaping wounds, its ghastliness, appeal powerfully to the morbid tastes of the masses. It is, of course, in perfect keeping with the genius of the Church, which panders to the passions and prejudices of

the people; but "The Descent from the Cross" is just one of those incidents to which but little prominence is given in the Bible, and its treatment here cannot but be offensive to those whose religious sentiments have been moulded by the spirit of Protestant Christianity.

In Volterra's picture the interest of the spectator is divided between the lowering of the body and the group of the women who are gathering round the fainting mother We admit, in this treatment of the subject, the transgression of artistic law, and the departure from the legendary traditions; but we would sooner look on that picture than on this, for the Italian seems to have felt what he was painting. We overlook the want of unity in his picture, because of the apparent singleness of his heart. We excuse his disobedience to the canon which forbad the representation of the Virgin as subject to a woman's weakness, and his addition to the normal number of the ladders, because he has given us a grand, impassioned work. We had rather see the dying anguish in Volterra's Madonna, than recognise the portrait of the wife of Rubens in the mother of our Lord. We prefer finding Salome utterly overwhelmed in this time of trouble, to discovering that, according to Rubens, she retained sufficient self-consciousness to be arranging her dress. The only persons, in the Antwerp picture, really in earnest, are the two workmen, finely fore-shortened figures, stretching over the arms of the cross, and they are borrowed. The other actors in the scene appear to be acting.

The composition of this "Descent from the Cross" raises again the subject of plagiarism, and suggests the question as to whether it is justifiable to plunder in the way which seems common in the art world. In the "Exposition of the Cartoons of Raphael" we found the figure of the Paul, in the "Preaching at Athens," was a copy; and the central group of Lystra is taken and adopted from an antique bas-relief in the Admiranda. The system seems to have prevailed from the first, and to have continued till to-day.

Sir Joshua Reynolds, a bold adopter, has his theory for the defence of this practice.

It is not easy, at any rate in pictures representing the events in the history of our Lord, to settle the question of originality. There is, however, sufficient internal evidence here to shew that Rubens must have seen the fresco of Volterra at Rome, and that he had no scruple in adopting some of the figures. His undeniable fertility of invention and skill screen him from any charge of poverty. He is said to have pilfered wholesale from the old Germans, and his lion and tiger hunts appear to be variations of Da Vinci's Cartoon of the Battle of the Standard, with the addition of the wild beasts. There is but little original invention in the world, and there is no place where this poverty is more patent than in a gallery of pictures.

In criticising the works of the old painters of Scripture subjects, it is only fair to remember that they were not left to themselves in the treatment of their designs, but were obliged to conform to established rules. Explicit directions were given by the Church, and the remarkably uniform character of their compositions is rather to be attributed to ecclesiastical authority than to poverty of invention.

A very celebrated treatise was written in the thirteenth century by John Fidenza, better known as St Bonaventura, entitled, "Meditations on the Life of Jesus Christ," which seems to have definitely fixed in Italy, France, Flanders, and England, the orthodox patterns.* Another ancient series of rules was drawn up in Greece, and is still held in the highest estimation by artists residing in Greek monasteries, and employed in the decoration of churches.

The following paragraph, containing Bonaventura's description of

* "Meditationes Vitæ Domini nostri Jesu Christi," first printed by Gunther Tainer in 1468. A very valuable translation, from a Bysantine MS., was published by M. Didron at Paris in 1845, and an English translation, in the same year, was made by the Rev. F. Oakley.

"The Taking Down from the Cross" of the body of our Saviour, will throw some light upon the composition of this picture, and it may be regarded as a sample of the minuteness of the details which were furnished to painters:—

"Do you now attend, as I have directed you in many places, diligently and fixedly, to the manner of Taking Down the Sacred Body. They place Two Ladders, one against each arm of The Cross. Joseph goes up the ladder on the right side, and tries hard to draw out the nail from His hand. But this it is difficult to do, for the nail is thick and long, and strongly fixed in the wood; and, without violently bruising the hand of our Lord, it does not seem as if it could be effected. But there is no rude violence in the act, for he does it in a loyal spirit; and it is thus that our Lord graciously receives it. As soon as it is drawn out, John makes a sign to Joseph that he should hand the nail to him, that our Lady might not see it. Then Nicodemus drew out the other nail from the left hand, and, in like manner, gives it to John. Then Nicodemus came down, and proceeded to draw out the nail which fastened the feet. Joseph, in the meanwhile, supported the body of our Lord. Happy Joseph! who enjoyed the privilege of thus embracing our Lord's Body. Then our Lady reverently took the right hand as it hung down, and presses it to her mouth: she gazes upon it and kisses it with floods of tears and dolorous sighs. As soon as Joseph had drawn out the nail which fastened the feet, within a while he came down; and then they all receive the Body of our Lord on the ground. Our Lady receives the sacred Head into her bosom; and Magdalene the feet, at which she had formerly found such grace. The others stand round, and all make great lamentation over Him: for they all mourn for Him in greatest bitterness;—'as one that mourneth for his only son.'"

It is thought that Michael Angelo furnished Volterra with his design. There is a plastic feeling and anatomical perfection in the descending body of the Christ, and a vigour and freshness about

the whole conception, which seems to betray the hand of the great master of form. To this the scholar doubtless alluded, when he painted his master with a looking-glass near it, as if to intimate that he might recognise in the picture a reflection of himself. Poussin considered it to be the third greatest picture in the world, inferior only to Raphael's "Transfiguration," and to the "St Jerome" of Domenichino. It was painted in the church of Trinità dé Monti, at Rome, and was transferred from the wall to canvas by Pietro Palmaroli in 1811, being the first experiment of that kind.

Rubens also has been indebted to Michael Angelo. He has adopted his main serpentine line, flowing diagonally from one corner of the picture to the other, and has thus added considerably to the unity and picturesqueness of his work. This line is produced by the form of the principal figure, and is still farther extended by the winding-sheet, and is continued by the elbow of the Magdalene, and passes away by the arm of Salome. The light follows the direction of the line, and answers the same purpose. The white drapery, ("the clean linen cloth" of the Gospels,) while determining the line, shapes the light, and is used in a masterly manner for producing a striking effect in chiaroscuro and colour. The originality of this conception also has been doubted. There is an Italian print, bearing the inscription, "Peter Passer, invenit; Hieronymus Wirix, sculpsit," which contains this device, and from which it has been supposed that it was borrowed by Rubens. Sir Joshua Reynolds, in his "Journey to Flanders and Holland," refers to the print, and at the same time furnishes some criticisms on this picture. "The greatest peculiarity," he says, "of this composition is the contrivance of the white sheet, on which the body of Jesus lies. This circumstance was probably what induced Rubens to adopt the composition. He well knew what effect white linen, opposed to flesh, must have with his powers of colouring; a circumstance which was not likely to enter into the mind of an Italian painter, who probably would have been afraid of the linen's hurting the

colouring of the flesh, and have kept it down of a low tint. And the truth is, that none but great colourists can venture to paint pure white linen near flesh; but such know the advantage of it, so that possibly what was stolen by Rubens, the possessor knew not how to value, and certainly no person knew so well as Rubens how to use. After all, this may perhaps turn out another *Lauder's* detection of plagiarism. I could wish to see this print, if there is one, to ascertain how far Rubens was indebted to it for his Christ, which I consider as one of the finest figures ever invented; it is most correctly drawn, and, I apprehend, in an attitude of the utmost difficulty to execute. The hanging of the head on His shoulder, and the falling of the body on one side, gives such an appearance of the heaviness of death that nothing can exceed it.

"Of the three Marys, two of them have more beauty than he generally bestowed on female figures, but no great elegance of character. The St Joseph of Arimathea is the same countenance which he so often introduced in his works—a smooth fat face; a very unhistorical character.

"The principal light is formed by the body of Christ and the white sheet; there is no second light which bears any proportion to the principal. In this respect it has more the manner of Rembrandt's disposition of light than any other of Rubens' works. However, there are many little detached lights distributed at some distance from the great mass, such as the head and shoulders of the Magdalene, the heads of the two Marys, the head of St Joseph, and the back and arm of the figure leaning over the cross, the whole surrounded with a dark sky, except a little light in the horizon, and above the cross."

The neutral tint running through the centre of the picture harmonises the whole. The three positive colours are placed at the angles of a triangle. The red robe of the apostle John, throwing an ivory tint over the corpse, abates its ghastliness; and the colour is repeated on the other side by the red cap of Joseph, and by the blood on the hand and arm of the Christ. The attention of the

spectator is drawn to the mother, who stands and supports the arm, (according to the legend,) by the great value given to the flesh of the face by the blue drapery. Her face and figure, however, form the least effective part of the picture. The blue is repeated in the garment of the figure, stretching with both arms over the cross. The dress of Joseph, the hair of the Magdalene, the hair and dress of the other Mary, and the light at the horizon, are of a yellow tint. The secondary colours are placed around the positive, the dress of Nicodemus being purple, and that of the Magdalene a green. The pure colours, placed side by side, are left for distance to blend. The gorgeous colouring of the picture, richly harmonious as it is, seems, however, to be more in accordance with the taste of the artist than with the tone of the scene.

His light is concentrated and confined chiefly to the principal figure, and the white drapery by which it is supported. The flesh forms a half tint. The deepest shadow is in the centre, and is brought to a focus by the arm of Nicodemus. The angle of the elbow assists also, by its form, in the expression of energy and power.

It appears evident, from the works of Rubens, that his method of painting was to lay on his colours in their place, one on the side of the other, and mix them afterwards by a slight touch of the pencil. Titian mingled his tints as they are in nature, in such a manner as to render it impossible to discover where they began or terminated; the effect is evident, the labour is concealed. Thus Rubens is more dazzling, and Titian more harmonious. In this respect, the first excites the attention, the second fixes it. The carnations of Titian resemble the blush of nature, those of Rubens are brilliant and polished like satin; and sometimes his tints are so strong and separate as to have the effect of spots.

This picture, while almost preventing us from dwelling upon the death of our adorable Redeemer, and discouraging those sacred feelings which are ever excited by a contemplation of that ineffable sacrifice, may serve to remind us of the two strange facts,—that

he *was* taken down from the cross, and that he was taken down from the cross by *Nicodemus*, and *Joseph of Arimathea.*

The Romans, as a rule, left the crucified on the crosses to be devoured by birds. The Jewish Sanhedrim evidently expected that there would be no deviation from the usual custom in this case, for we read, "The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath-day, (for that Sabbath-day was a high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away." *

The death of our Lord, and the slightest circumstances connected with it, had happened by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. His burial had been foretold, and events proved that everything had been anticipated. Up to the moment of His death, however, nothing had occurred to render it likely. If the bodies of the crucified were not granted to their friends, they were flung into the Gehenna; but the disciples of our Lord had forsaken Him and fled. There were, indeed, the women who had followed Him in His life, and had been faithful till death, but they were helpless. At the last moment and in a most unexpected manner, without any interference of His recognised disciples or intimate friends, the prophecy is fulfilled. "It is the Lord's doing, and marvellous in our eyes."

Our Lord *was* taken down from the cross, and the descent was actually effected by two members of the Sanhedrim. Until the crucifixion, we have no knowledge of the existence of Joseph of Arimathea; and if we had heard of him, we should never have suspected his feeling towards Christ, since we are told that none of the rulers believed on Him. What we had known of Nicodemus would never have led us to suppose that he would have done what the professed disciples of our Lord dared not do. When we consider the worldly wealth of these two men, and their social standing, and that by such an act they perilled their property and position, (for any manifestation of faith in Jesus of Nazareth would lead to their excommunication, and that involved the sacrifice of civil as

* John xix. 31.

well as of religious rights,) we may assuredly see the finger of God. They may both have felt a considerable interest in the work, teaching, and life of our Lord, and they must have been unquestionably attached to Him, but they had not yet openly declared themselves. They were only secret disciples. They had, as yet, feared the Jews more than they had cared for Christ. Nicodemus, truly, had once in the Sanhedrim spoken a word on behalf of our Lord, and had absented himself with Joseph from the council meeting when the death was determined on; but no reliance could be placed upon this negative feeling. We should have said, that if any interference would be made on behalf of the body, it would not have been made by them.

The presence and the conduct of Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, may be regarded as some of the very first fruits of the power of the cross. From the very day when our Lord took up His cross, there have been those who have taken up theirs and followed Him. The love of Christ can constrain Christians to do and to suffer anything for Him. The record of the Descent seems to have been written to shew that, although we may be born rich, or be naturally cowards,—although we may be well-connected in our church,—faith in Christ as the redeeming God will give us a victory over ourselves, the world, and even the very church to which we may belong.

The very linen teaches us a lesson. As we look at it, we know that it bodes a burial. It is a winding-sheet. We are taught again that every word of God is true. Heaven and earth may pass away, but His words cannot pass away till all be fulfilled. Had the other members of the Sanhedrim succeeded in obtaining the body, they would, doubtless, have flung it into a dishonoured grave; but how, then, could the Scriptures have been fulfilled? Our Lord had suffered with the thieves, but He is to be buried by Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man, in his own tomb, for it had been written:—

> "Although his grave was appointed with the wicked,
> Yet with a rich man would be his tomb." *

* Isa. liii. 9.

EXPOSITIONS OF GREAT PICTURES.

No. VII.

The Burial of our Lord.

"Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus therefore, because of the Jews' preparation-day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand."—JOHN xix. 41, 42.

THE BURIAL OF OUR LORD.

"LORD! when Thou didst Thyselfe undresse,
Laying by Thy robes of glory,
To make us more Thou wouldst be lesse,
And becam'st a wofull story.

"To put on Clouds instead of light,
And cloath the morning-starre with dust,
Was a translation of fresh height
As, but in Thee, was ne'r exprest.

"Brave wormes and Earth! that thus could have
A God Enclosed within your Cell,
Your Maker pent up in a grave,
Life lockt in death, Heaven in a shell!

"Ah, my deare Lord! what couldst Thou spye
In this impure, rebellious clay,
That made Thee thus resolve to dye
For those that kill Thee every day!

"Oh, what strange wonders could Thee move
To slight Thy precious bloud and breath?
Sure it was *Love*, my Lord; for *Love*
Is only stronger far than death!"

HENRY VAUGHAN.

HIS last picture forms a striking contrast to the first. In the Madonna della Seggiola, the Virgin appears as the happy mother of her first-born child. Here her heart and her flesh have failed her, and her face and form are full of blank desolation. In both pictures her Son is resting on her knees, but in the one He is full of life, and nestles in her bosom; in the other He hangs heavily upon her with all the heaviness of death.

During some short pause in the hurried proceedings, the mother,

with a mother's feelings, and the strong instinct of a breaking heart, has found the body as it has been left alone for a moment, and she has sat herself down upon the ground and lifted up its head. It is the last act in a long day. She has over-estimated her powers of endurance. The tension of her feelings will bear nothing more, much less this. Ere she has folded the body in her arms, she falls back in a swoon. The women, who may have been assisting at the tomb, see her falling and run to save her. One is in time. Another stands, still stretching out her hands. Mary Magdalene is arrested by the face of the dead, and falls, in an agony, on her knees.

According to the legend, the afflicted mother had embraced the arm of her son, as soon as it had been liberated from the cross, and the apostle John had taken away, secretly, the nails which had fastened the hands, that she might not see them. The nails which fastened the feet appear, in this picture, to have been overlooked, and they seem to be so placed by the artist as if he would attribute the swoon in some measure to them.

There is no Scripture authority for this scene. It is just one of those circumstances which might have happened, but one that was sure not to have been recorded. A studied reserve is maintained throughout the sacred history respecting the mother of our Lord; she is seldom noticed after the birth at Bethlehem, and when any reference is made to her, it is so slight, that it would seem as if the heresy of her worship had been anticipated and provided against. "The testimony of Christ" is the purpose of the gospels, as much as it is "the spirit of prophecy." Nothing irrelevant is introduced, still less anything that might distract the attention from Him, who is the only object of a sinner's faith and love. Christ is all in all. The canvas is not crowded. There is no question as to the principal figure. The evangelist John, evidently guided by that principle of selection, on which the whole of revelation is composed, seems to have been inspired with the gift of reticence. His history, and those of the other evangelists, are completely

opposed in this, as well as in other points, to the voluminous, confused, and purposeless accounts of unauthorised narrators. The apostle is as explicit respecting the omissions in his gospel, as he is concerning its aim. "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name."*

The women may have taken some part in "The Deposition." The death of our Lord had been sudden and unexpected. It occurred not many minutes after He had committed His mother to the care of the beloved disciple. Others, besides Pilate, must have marvelled when they saw, or when they heard of the early and abrupt termination of the tragedy. No one was aware that He was dying before He was crucified, not even His disciples, though they had seen Him in His agony sweating great drops of blood. He was stricken for death at Gethsemane, rather than at Calvary. The cross may have hastened His end, but He must have died if He had not been crucified. "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities;" but it was in His mind more than in His body. "And a wounded spirit who can bear?"

The mother of our Lord, her sister Mary, the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene, might therefore have been still standing by the cross with John when all was over. They might have borne some momentary part in the taking down of the body, and it is just possible that some such a scene as is here represented might have occurred, though, perhaps, it is by no means likely. We are told that "His acquaintance and the women who followed Him from Galilee stood afar off, beholding these things." They seem to have drawn off towards the close. At the approach of Nicodemus and Joseph, learning their errand, they may have retraced their steps.

Although the body of our Lord stretches along the foreground of this picture, it does not seem to have been painted to shew forth

* John xx. 30, 31.

His death, but rather to awaken our sympathy for the "Mater Dolorosa." The line of the corpse leads us to her fainting figure, and the other lines of the picture verging towards her, we are at once aware of its intention. Only Mary Magdalene is looking at our Lord. It might form one of a series of pictures of the life of the Virgin.

The treatment of the picture supposes the descent to have been accomplished, and the arrangements for the entombment to be taking place. The women may have been away preparing the spices. It represents an intermediate moment. The technical title of the scene is "The Deposition." A deposition is treated as a history, and it is distinguished from the devotional form of the subject which is called a "Pietà." A Pietà is addressed to the faith and piety of an observer.

According to Mrs Jameson:—"The most important and most beautiful of all, as far as the Virgin is concerned, is the group called the 'PIETÀ,' which, when strictly devotional, consists only of the Virgin with her dead Son in her arms, or on her lap, or lying at her feet; in some instances with lamenting angels, but no other personages. This group has been varied in a thousand ways: no doubt the two most perfect conceptions are those of Michael Angelo and Raphael; the first excelling in sublimity, the latter in pathos. The celebrated marble group by Michael Angelo stands in the Vatican in a chapel to the right as we enter. The Virgin is seated; the dead Saviour lies across the knees of His mother; she looks down on Him in mingled sorrow and resignation, but the majestic resignation predominates. The composition of Raphael exists only as a print; but the flimsy paper, consecrated through its unspeakable beauty, is likely to be as lasting as the marble. It represents the Virgin standing with outstretched arms, and looking up with an appealing, agonised expression towards heaven; before her, on the earth, lies extended the form of the Saviour. In tenderness, dignity, simplicity, and tragic pathos, nothing can exceed this production; the head of the Virgin, in particular, is regarded as a masterpiece, so far

exceeding every other work of Marc Antonio, that some have thought that Raphael himself took the basin from his hand, and touched himself that face of woe.

"Another example of wonderful beauty is the 'Pietà' by Francia, in our National Gallery. The form of Christ lies extended before His mother; a lamenting angel sustains the head, another is at the feet; the Virgin, with eyes red and heavy with weeping, looks out of the picture. There needs no visible sword in her bosom to tell what anguish has pierced that maternal heart."

"The Deposition" formed a frequent subject for votive pictures, offered by those who had been bereaved. These pictures were hung as memorials in chapels consecrated to their dead. The Virgin is represented in them as the mother of Pity, and being possessed, as a mother, of a love which is revealed to be the highest type of the love of God, and having suffered the greatest of human sorrows, she would appear as if she were able to sympathise with, and almost to succour, the children of woe. These types, although the shadows of some better thing which God has provided for us, are not the very image of the thing, and can never make the comers thereunto perfect. There is nothing in a Deposition or a Pietà, although it may have been painted for the consolation of the afflicted, "to minister to a mind diseased." There is nothing in the Virgin which will enable any to rejoice in tribulation. The Virgin cannot help herself. Here she has sunk senseless under her sorrow, and she is surrounded by those who are sorrowing, as those sorrow who have no hope. It is but poor consolation that is to be derived from considering the sorrows of others. A mere human being, however tried and however touched with a feeling for our infirmities, is but a miserable comforter after all. There is but One who has been sent to bind up the broken-hearted, and He alone can give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

Moving from the standpoint of the faithful, and looking at this picture in the light of Protestant Christianity, we are, perhaps, as

impressed with the utter helplessness of the mourners as we are with the poignancy of their grief. Some critics can only see the women weeping and hear them wail, almost ridiculing their frantic cries as womanish weakness. Their criticism is as superficial as it is unkind. Every allowance is to be made. It is the first overwhelming burst of anguish. The mother has given way, and for the moment her companions are overcome. All alike claim our compassion. They had attended on our Lord during His ministry, and had ministered to Him of their substance, entertained Him in their homes; they had lived with Him and loved Him; they had begun to believe in Him as the Christ, the Son of God, having seen the mighty miracles which He had done, and having heard the gracious words that had proceeded out of His mouth. One had often sat at His feet, and had once and again manifested her strong personal attachment to Him. She had received her dead brought to life again, and had betrayed some power of retaining her faith in Him although He should be crucified. Faithful till death, they had followed Him weeping, when His disciples had forsaken Him and fled. He had given them some of His last days, and had addressed to them some of His last words. Perhaps with more than the usual infatuation of those who love, they had not believed that He could really die. Holding, in common with the disciples, the doctrine of a temporal Messiah and a personal reign, they would share the suspicion of Judas, that in an extremity, there would be a provision made for some way of escape. At first they would think that He would never be delivered into the hands of the Sanhedrim; and then when He was, they would be sure that He could never be crucified; and even at the last, they would expect Him to come down from the cross. Their faith fails them, and their hope has put them to shame. The whole is a delusion. They cannot believe that this Jesus of Nazareth, suffering these things, is the Christ of God. They are Jews, and "Christ crucified is to the Jews a stumblingblock." Their hearts are bursting with disappointment as well as with woe. They are at their wits' end, having been brought to desolation in a moment.

It is possible that the selection of this subject for a picture, or, at any rate, its treatment, has been somewhat influenced by the words of the prophet Zechariah. "And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him as one who is in bitterness for his first-born." *

The picture belongs, nominally, to the Eclectic school. If it were only for the sake of its strange power over the masses, (as proved by the crowds it drew in the Manchester Exhibition of 1857,) it would bring credit to any academy. The Eclectics were, however, unfortunate in their pretensions and their poetry. They tried to form a perfect school by the union of the principles of all others. A sonnet, by one of their number, Agostino Caracci, in which this patchwork ideal is thus described, has often laid them open to ridicule. "Let him who wishes to be a good painter acquire the design of Rome, Venetian action and Venetian management of shade, the dignified colour of Lombardy, (that is, of Leonardo da Vinci,) the terrible manner of Michael Angelo, Titian's brush and nature, the sovereign purity of Correggio's style, and the just symmetry of a Raphael; the decorum and well-grounded study of Tibaldi, the invention of the learned Primaticcio, and a *little* of Parmigianio's grace; but without so much study and weary labour, let him apply himself to imitate the works which our Niccolò (dell' Abbate) left us here."

The whole reads like a mistake. Eclecticism seems to ignore the condition under which we achieve any success or enjoy any good. We are always beaten in every victory, and we have to take some evil with every boon. When the theory is applied to painting it is found to be absurd, since the excellence of any characteristic quality is lost as soon as it is separated from others by which it had been controlled and harmonised. The system in which the most original painters have worked, has been, in a measure, always eclectic; and so, in a sense, it will remain. No painter of true taste can see an

* Zechariah xii. 10.

excellence anywhere, without the wish and the effort to engraft it into his own style.

The Eclectics were not, and indeed they could not be, true to their principles. They were, as many others have been, better than their creed. They served their day and generation by drawing the attention of the art-world to the principles that lay at the foundation of picturesque science, (for painting is a science,) and they were as faithful to Nature as any of the Naturalisti. They lived in an age of insipidity, mannerism, and extravagance, and while falling into the mistakes, they displayed the energy of all earnest reformers. Annibale, the greatest of the Caracci, and the acknowledged leader of the school, painted this picture. It was formerly in the Orleans collection, and is now the property of the Earl of Carlisle.

A serpentine line runs diagonally through the composition, and the eye is carried by it into and out of the picture. Distance is given by the main line leading away to the sky. The idea of depth is felt from the falling back of the figures from the very foreground. The small corner of sky helps you to breathe, for there is an oppression in the atmosphere, as if the gloom of the great darkness had not entirely passed away. The whole of the remaining portion of the background is enclosed, with here and there a tree among the rocks. The trees remind you that you are in a garden;—you hardly need to look at the rocks which have been hewn, to remind you that in that garden there is a sepulchre. The streaks in the sky tell the time. It is toward evening, and the day is far spent.

The pose of the arm of the corpse, as it hangs over the knee of the Virgin, (so helpful in the expression of death,) seems to have been required to be repeated again and again, that some of the severity of the line might be abated. You trace its form in the other arm behind it. The hands, feet, and legs, have none of that rigidity which is sometimes given in entombments, by those who forget that life had but lately lingered in them, and that it had been taken away in such a manner as to prevent terrible death from taking possession of the body with his usual rigour.

The shock of death is broken by a gradation. You pass from death to life by having to look on the fainting form of the Virgin. The danger of confounding the resemblance with the reality was of course great, but the difference has been preserved by the expressions of the countenances, the ghastly hue, flung by the blue drapery of the Virgin over the corpse, (a russet handkerchief being placed near her face,) and last, not least, the contrast of her living hand, which still rests upon the body, and has not quite lost all its power.

The hands are equal in expression to the faces. They repeat the feeling of the picture with many variations and without any tautology. They add greatly to the unity of the impression of a moment of unutterable woe. They are deficient, as are the faces, in refinement, but that could not have been avoided. Strength of feeling is incompatible with symmetry of form and delicacy of expression. The Greeks felt that their ideal of the human form would have suffered, if it were associated with human feelings and passions. Hence the statues of their passionless gods.

As we look upon this picture, we remember that we do not worship One who cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, and that we are not called to mourn over "a dead Christ." He is not dead, He is risen. The apostles themselves ever seemed to shrink from dwelling upon the death of our Lord, and with evident haste and gratitude turned to His resurrection and His life. "He died," say they, "yea rather, is risen again, and is even at the right hand of God." Our Lord himself does not wish us to think much of death and the grave. He weeps with us as we mourn over those whom we have lost, as He wept with this Mary who is weeping over Him here. What He said to her, He says to us all, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die. Believest thou this?"

Ballantyne and Company, Printers, Edinburgh.

By the same Author,

ILLUSTRATED BY PHOTOGRAPHS PRINTED BY NEGRETTI AND ZAMBRA,

THE

Expositions of the Cartoons of Raphael.

Price 8s. 6d. cloth elegant.

EXTRACTS FROM REVIEWS.

"In place of the old insipid annuals, we have now a numerous race of books far better adapted for the gifts which help so much to make Christmas merry and the New Year happy. Various in size, price, and character, they suit all purses, ages, and temperaments. At the head of our present batch, we may place 'Expositions of the Cartoons of Raphael,' (Nisbet & Co.,) the author of which is Richard Henry Smith, jun., evidently a man of artistic taste and strong religious feeling, who has made his residence near Hampton Court an opportunity for continuous study of the famous Cartoons, and seems to have constituted himself a sort of oral interpreter of 'the divine painter' to groups of holiday people, glad of every information about the artist and his work. Thus, he says, he had been led on to write these popular expositions of the story of each Cartoon. But of course no exposition would be worth having without a presentment of the Cartoon itself, and that part of the work has been very successfully accomplished by Messrs Negretti and Zambra, the photographists. The scale of the work is necessarily so much reduced from the original, that a glass is necessary for the due examination of the photographs; and with this auxiliary, the 'Expositions' will be found a very useful as well as handsome book—a treasure of artistic pleasure and New Testament knowledge."—*Morning Star.*

"The handsome book now before us, containing a photograph of each of the Cartoons, with Mr Smith's very thoughtful and tasteful comments upon them, will serve to perpetuate and to improve the salutary as well as gratifying impressions which a view of those grand paintings must create."—*Daily News.*

"The possible publication of such a volume at so low a price is a positive triumph, in its way over the difficulties of costly and laborious art. The expositions which accompany them are pious and sensible; and this book is one which will retain its interest, and answer any season."—*Blackwood's Magazine.*

"But it is not in the photographs, after all, that the great charm of this book lies, for us—it is in the expositions of the great painter furnished by Mr Smith. He tells us that, having studied the Cartoons in the gallery at Hampton Court, he became, 'year after year, more interested in them, and as he became more familiar with them, was led to search the Scriptures from which Raphael selected his subjects:' the present book is the result of his investigation of the sacred record of the various scenes, and of his study of their treatment by this 'divine' painter. How much this man sees! The clear indication of the great features in a Cartoon, the appreciation of its minutest details, and the grasp of its whole significance, which mark each exposition, interest us not only by the interpretation of Raphael, but by the display of powers of keen analysis and of broad combination, that are very rare for their delicacy and their strength. We have felt again and again, in turning from the expository page to the Cartoon, it illustrates that we have received a revelation of spiritual meaning wholly unsuspected by us before. But not less do we admire Mr Smith's acquaintance with Scripture. Only by knowing it perfectly himself, and by bringing true insight to its unfolding, could he exhibit Raphael's profound and more than artistic, even spiritual and emotional, conversance with the Word he translated and expounded by his art. And the religious thought is as robust and manly as the artistic comment is discerning and suggestive. The work is one, consequently, not merely to be added to the elegancies of the drawing-room, but to be used in the family,—a mother's treat for the children on a Sabbath evening at home, or a lonely hour's pure pleasure when other 'means of grace' are denied."—*Nonconformist.*

"We have no doubt that the few pages of Mr Smith's book will go far to revive the fallen taste

for the Cartoons. The book may confidently be recommended as one likely to be reverenced by all."—*Illustrated Times.*

"This is a most dainty and pleasant book to set before the public. Handsomely bound, printed with a clear beautiful type on tinted paper, embellished with a series of photographs as perfect as their size will permit, the 'Expositions,' if only the author's aim be taken into the account not unworthy of these luxurious accessories,—no illustrated gift book of the season, of an equal price, is likely to surpass it. The book is of too dainty and delicate a sort to be very largely used as a guide, and referred to in the presence of those great works of art which have suggested it; but hardly any one can read it, referring meanwhile to the photographs which illustrate it, without being prepared to study the Cartoons at Hampton Court with a more thoughtful and discerning eye. It is a great misfortune that many people, the large majority of us, perhaps, when looking at a masterpiece of art, in which the thought and toil of years are expressed, grow impatient if it does not at once disclose its full meaning and beauty. In our immodest haste we forget that what it has tasked brain and heart to conceive and express, it tasks brain and heart to apprehend, that the products of a mind of far larger original endowment and more various culture than our own must long perplex our labouring thoughts. Because we are thus forgetful, we pass by with indifference, and as unworthy of studious regard, that which, if we were more modest and observant, would refine and enlarge our faculties, and make of every 'thing of beauty' 'a joy for ever.' It would be well for us if we approached every work of a master, every work which has won the approval of 'the generations of the wise,' in a reverent and expectant spirit. The more we look for, the more we shall find; the more humble we are, the more we shall open ourselves to the influences of that creative spirit which God has breathed into the more gifted of the sons of men. Mr Smith teaches us, by example and precept, to approach the Cartoons of Raphael in this temper. He has qualified himself for the office of expositor, by some four or five years of loving, even enthusiastic study; during which time he has made successful copies of each of the Cartoons. While he has copied, he has evidently brooded over the painter's meaning, aiming to realise and give expression to his thought."—*Freeman.*

"In the 'Expositions of the Cartoons of Raphael' photography is well employed in reproducing with great accuracy the celebrated works of the Italian master which now rest at Hampton Court. Although Mr Smith does not pretend to be an art critic, he makes some very sensible remarks on painting, and describes the Cartoons so thoroughly, that it is evident he has made them a particular study."—*Morning Post.*

"A study of this volume will go far towards shewing how much the artist intends that the superficial observer fails to recognise."—*Manchester Examiner and Times.*

"Mr Smith has spent some years in the study of these paintings, and, as the result of his careful application, has gained such an insight into their whole meaning, and such an appreciation of the excellencies displayed by the painter, that he is a most instructive and entertaining guide. A further attraction to the non-professional reader is the simple and intelligible manner in which Mr Smith has written his expositions, avoiding all technicalities."—*Sheffield and Rotherham Independent.*

"It is pleasant to listen to Mr Smith as he eloquently expatiates on Raphael's marvellous knowledge of Scripture. The binding and general execution of the volume are in the first style of art." —*Clerical Journal.*

"The photographs are excellent, but their excellence, like that of the originals, only comes out as the reward of study. The spirit in which the analyses are written is admirable. We are constrained to admit that, with these accessories, we, though admiring students of the Cartoons for years, have discovered points of meaning and beauty in the photographs which had escaped us in the originals. The reader will constantly find light thrown not only on the Ca toon, but on the passage of Scripture to the illustration of which it is devoted. The volume is got up with exquisite taste. The tinted paper, with its soft creamy glaze, and the clear, beautiful type, render this one of the most attractive gift books which can be desired for the approaching festive season."—*Baptist Magazine.*

"This is a most delightful volume. We welcome it as an artistic work that will throw a new charm over the world-famed Cartoons of Raphael. The writer of the expositions has evidently had his heart in the subject. His remarks not only tend to elucidate the meaning of the painter, but are full of earnestness and graphic beauty. The religious aspect of the subject is brought at the same time into strong relief; and those who love the Scripture narratives will read those expositions with peculiar interest. Both, therefore, as a work of artistic excellence and of instructive teaching, the volume is very welcome."—*Bradford Review.*

"We cannot follow Mr Smith through his paraphrase—the idea of which is very happy: he has made the Cartoons preach the gospel fully and impressively, yet without the least approach to cant. We are sure the book, which the publishers have justly done their part in recommending by beautiful printing and an elegant exterior, will find its way to many a drawing-room, and, better still, to many a fireside in this approaching Christmas."—*Patriot.*

LONDON: JAMES NISBET & CO., 21 BERNERS STREET.

University of California
SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
405 Hilgard Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90024-1388
Return this material to the library
from which it was borrowed.

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY

AA 000 286 991 5

Univer
Sou
Li